**Wyoming School-University Partnership**

**Governing Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, July 9, 2014**

**10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

University Union Building, Room 322

Casper College Campus, Wyoming 82601

Those in attendance included the following board members, guests, and staff.

***Governing board members:***

*Aaron Carr (Niobrara 1), Diana Clapp (Fremont 6), Jean Chrostoski (Goshen 1), Michael Day (UW, College of Education, interim dean), Dennis Fischer (Platte 1), Paige Fenton Hughes (Wyoming Department of Education, State Board of Education), Dee Ludwig (Eastern Wyoming College, Vice President for Learning), David Nicholas (Washakie 1), Leslie Rush (UW, College of Education, Teacher Education, associate dean), Ray Schulte (Park 6), Ron Sniffin (Wyoming Education Association, executive director), Audrey Shalinsky (UW, College of Arts & Sciences, associate dean), Kathy Vetter (Wyoming Education Association, president), and Rick Woodford (Big Horn 2).*

***Guests:***

*Nick Bellack (Professional Teaching Standards Board), Greg Brown (UW, College of Arts & Sciences, associate dean), Andrea Bryant (Professional Teaching Standards Board), Nancy Doorey (Cross & Joftus, consulting firm), John Kambutu (UW, College of Education, Educational Studies, department head), and Bob Schuhmann (UW, College of Arts & Sciences, associate dean).*

***Staff:***

*Audrey Kleinsasser (Partnership director) and Beth Wiley (Partnership office associate).*

Diana called the meeting to order at 10:10. The meeting began a little late due to construction at Casper College. She welcomed and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Special guests included Andrea Bryant and Nick Bellack from the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board, Nancy Doorey from the consulting firm Cross & Joftus, Greg Brown and Bob Schuhmann, associate deans of the UW College of Arts & Sciences, and John Kambutu, department head of the UW College of Education Educational Studies department.

Diana asked Audrey Kleinsasser to present the meeting agenda and supporting materials which included the financial report, the April 10 meeting minutes, and the director’s report. Audrey K. briefly explained each item. Kathy Vetter moved to approve the agenda and related consent agenda items. Dee Ludwig seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved.

Diana introduced Audrey Shalinsky as the facilitator for the grounding discussion aboutselected essays from *Heal Up and Hair Over: A Wyoming Civility Reader*. (Published by the Wyoming Humanities Council. For more information about the reader, please visit <http://www.thinkwy.org/heal-up/>.) Audrey S. explained for new members and visitors that Partnership board members have a discussion at each meeting to ground members in the principles of the Partnership, especially the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. The Agenda for Education in a Democracy is one of the foundational principles of the national organization the Partnership belongs to, the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER). The Partnership wants schools at every level to foster civic engagement and understanding of the democratic process.

In the following discussion about *Hamburgers in Jeffrey City*, board members recognized that civility could be easier to achieve if we establish common ground. Andrea Bryant confessed that when she reveals her family connections, people take their guard down and are instantly kinder and more receptive to what she has to say. Ron Sniffin said that the essay illustrated the value of one on one conversation. John Kambutu added that he thinks civility is about taking the time to understand another person’s point of view. Rick Woodford pointed out that controversy and open discussion can be an opportunity to learn. Audrey S. suggested that avoiding the political conversation within the essay might be the easy way out. Several board members disagreed, suggesting that searching for something in common could eventually lead to a productive and respectful conversation about strongly felt dissenting political opinions.

Diana expanded on this point, saying that John Goodlad, an NNER founder, argues that civility is foundational to a functioning democracy. Civility is not innate and must be taught. Paige Fenton Hughes shared that the Joint Interim Education Committee (JEC) and the State Board of Education recently discussed that very thing. Are we teaching students the skills needed to interact civilly in a democracy? There is a concern about the massive amount of information available online and through social media. Audrey S. said she worried about people imitating the interactions they see on television, such as shouting at each other. Kathy Vetter said she was worried about the incivility running rampant through social media. Nick Bellack observed that civility might come down to trust. Trust can breed civility.

Bob Schuhmann suggested that our culture is missing civil conversations in everyday life. People don’t communicate directly with their neighbors, and are not attempting to solve problems with their neighbors. Instead, our culture turns to government or other organizations. An example is if a dog barks in the neighborhood, we don’t go to the neighbor, we call animal control. Diana suggested that we need to reinforce the idea of one on one conversation. In the Pavillion middle school, the teachers try to teach the students to keep a conflict only two people big. David Nicholas added that can be difficult with social media. In his district, a principal’s feelings were hurt when a group started a petition to fire the principal on social media. Ray Schulte suggested that many people today don’t want to understand or hear other viewpoints because of the many conspiracy theories circulating, for example about the Common Core. Aaron Carr observed that church used to be the place where children might learn civility, but our current culture sees a decrease in students who attend church. Does school need to pick up as the place where children learn civility and good manners?

On a positive note, Dee shared that about ten years ago, Eastern Wyoming College began a Civitas Award to show that civility mattered. Every month, the student senate votes on these awards recognizing someone for his or her civility. Audrey K. wrapped up the conversation by commenting that she is realizing civility may be about slowing down and not reacting too quickly. Jobs in education are difficult. As educators and leaders, we need and want to take the high road, but it’s never easy. She sees her students at the university often reacting hastily without trying to really figure out what someone else is saying. We need to be modeling the kind of behavior we want to see from our students.

Audrey S. thanked everyone for the conversation. Diana commented that she hoped taking the time at governing board meetings to try to slow down and talk about things that are foundational to what the Partnership does will take board members and guests back into their work refreshed and renewed.

Diana handed out a summary concerning the survey board members took this year about Audrey K.’s performance objectives. The survey was part of the executive committee’s yearly review of the Partnership director’s role. The summary suggests several things the executive committee might do differently if they survey the board again. One thing the executive committee realized is that the board doesn’t have enough working knowledge about several of these objectives to evaluate the director. One example is Audrey K.’s supervision of office staff. Diana also thanked Audrey K. for her work as Partnership director, and pointed out that the survey revealed that Audrey’s visibility around the state is important and productive for the Partnership.

Diana also mentioned that the survey revealed some board members had questions about the website. Audrey K. and Diana showed those present that information about the Lost in Transition meetings, all past newsletters, other Partnership reports, and more can be found on the Partnership website, [www.uwyo.edu/wsup](http://www.uwyo.edu/wsup). Audrey K. pointed out that the Partnership is approaching its 30th anniversary. Diana encouraged everyone to consider attending a summer leadership symposium hosted by the NNER in Seattle. Audrey K. and Diana encouraged superintendents to think about becoming the chair of the Partnership, as well. There are also National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) councils that superintendents could volunteer to sit on. There was a break for lunch.

Diana reconvened after lunch, introducing Nancy Doorey, a consultant from Cross & Joftus who is conducting a study for the JEC. Nancy explained that she is conducting one on one interviews broadly around the state. Cross & Joftus have been tasked with trying to figure out what the feeling is in Wyoming concerning whether or not to change the governance structure of state education. Between October 1 and November 1, Cross & Joftus will present the JEC with a summary of the interviews and questionnaires from Wyoming stakeholders. Then, Cross & Joftus will suggest recommendations from their summary for the Legislature to consider. In addition to the individual interviews conducted in person, Cross & Joftus will provide a short questionnaire administered online. Nancy is also looking for group opinions. She encouraged everyone present to share the interview protocol with the group he or she represents and send back a consensus opinion. Cross & Joftus is very interested in group responses that are developed after people have debated the pros and cons of various options. Audrey K. offered to send out the interview protocol through email to the governing board.

Audrey K. asked if any state has ever been successful in moving from an elected chief state school officer to an appointed position. Nancy responded that the states that have changed their governance from an elected official to an appointed one haven’t had to change their constitutions but only had to change a statute. Nancy also pointed out that there is no magic governance structure. Paige asked if there was any research to suggest that what is done at the state level matters. Nancy explained that attributes, such as clear rules and responsibilities, and who is in charge, do matter when it comes to student success. There is, however, no one right way to have a state governance structure for education. Every model comes down to the quality of leadership. Diana asked everyone if they could make sure to give their input to Nancy, and then thanked Nancy for joining the meeting.

Kathy reported out about the Wyoming Education Association’s (WEA) plan to help teachers in Wyoming with student learning objectives. The WEA sent a team of nine to Minnesota to learn about student learning objectives. Another team participated in a boot camp in South Dakota. These teams included teachers from Cheyenne and Casper and representatives from the WEA and the Wyoming Department of Education. The three year plan is to use these teams to train others, beginning in Cheyenne and then disseminating throughout the state to prepare teachers, administrators, and schools to effectively write student learning objectives before Wyoming’s accountability law goes into effect.

Andrea mentioned that the Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) is close to releasing its new online licensure site. Districts should have more detailed access and quicker notifications about issues such as mis-assignments.

Michael wanted everyone to know that the UW College of Education is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The college is hoping to make it a celebration of the profession and teachers (including community teachers such as librarians and museum curators), not just the college. Michael and a committee are planning to visit every county in Wyoming to discuss how the college can reconnect with the state. He hoped to see everyone September 5-6th for a kick-off weekend in Laramie at the Wyoming vs. Air Force football game.

Dee explained that there are a few initiatives that the community colleges are involved in right now. One initiative is Complete College Wyoming. One goal Wyoming community colleges are working toward is giving incoming students supplemental instructional support to enable these students to take courses for college credit immediately instead of remedial classes. There are also currently discussions happening between UW and the community colleges. There are some problems with credits transferring and with students finishing a degree in four years. But, these problems are being discussed and solutions are being actively sought.

Paige updated those present about the State Board of Education. The board is currently working on assessment. In particular, the board hopes to find an alternative to the current assessment contract that is costing the state $18.5 million. For now, the board has stopped conversations about science standards in an attempt to get the Wyoming Legislature to remove what the State Board is calling censorship. The State Board would like to remind all of the school districts that they can always have more rigorous standards than the state.

Diana thanked everyone for their updates. Audrey K. will let the board know about NNER leadership and council assignments via email.

One of the final actions of the board was to come to a consensus about the 2014-2015 Partnership governing board meeting schedule. The 2014-2015 meeting schedule is:

1. Wednesday, October 29, 2014 – 10am-2pm, Casper
2. Wednesday, January 28, 2015 – meeting using distance technology, TBD during the regular 10am-2pm time block (2 hours or less)
3. Wednesday, April 29, 2015 – 10am-2pm, Casper
4. Wednesday, July 8, 2015 – 10am-2pm, Casper

Diana requested everyone complete a meeting evaluation form (transcribed comments appear below) and adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Beth Wiley, July 10, 2014.

**Wyoming School-University Partnership**

**Governing Board Meeting Evaluation Form**

**July 9, 2014**

*Session feedback transcribed July 10, 2014 n = 6 responses*

*All responses from evaluation forms were transcribed exactly as written.*

*Not all respondents answered all questions.*

1. **What insights or reactions did you have from the grounding discussion led by Audrey Shalinsky?**

* Heal Up and Hair Over is a great collection of articles.
* This is an important discussion. One thought – we need a wrap up, next steps, call to action at the end of our grounding – so what was the point of the discussion and what should we do as a result?
* Good conversations on civility. Maybe should spend time discussing what we can do to promote these notions.
* It was interesting to hear individual perceptions.
* Civility is an area that impacts education at all levels & may be more difficult now because of social media.
* An important & complex issue that we all realize needs more attention. Well done, Audrey S.

1. **Have you used the Wyoming Humanities Council’s civility reader, *Heal Up and Hair Over*, with a leadership group or any other kind of conversation or discussion in your setting? If so, how did it go?**

* Not yet but will . . . my leadership team will enjoy this work.
* Shared w/ the state board. Will lead a discussion about our reading at the November retreat.
* Not yet – but –
* Not yet.
* No – but I intend to work with a group of faculty at my institution.
* No.

1. **As Diana, Audrey, and Beth plan the next meeting, do you have any suggestions for readings or discussion topics that would relate to the democratic practice goals of the Partnership?**

* Stay with Democracy in Education – the “big picture” is why I attend the UW partnership.
* So . . . James Kapptie in Cody is leading a Twitter book discussion this summer on Open by David Price – I wonder if Raymond might bring him & we could share some stuff . . . maybe.
* Any discussion that improves articulation between p-12 to college.
* Community problem solving?

1. **Reactions, suggestions, recommendations, or anything else you’d like meeting planners to know?**

* Great meeting. Thank you.
* Good meeting – as always –
* Went well – Thanks!
* Clean up agenda. Some topics we have the material & can read. Report from the Colleges & Districts might be beneficial.
* Nicely done. Good to meet & see everyone.