



2007 Annual NNER Conference:

A new chapter begins. . . our story continues

Our West Virginia hosts provided a welcoming reception that set a warm, collegial tone for the 2007 NNER conference held October 3-6. **William Getty**, president of the Benedum Foundation serving West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania, opened the conference by describing the Benedum Collaborative's long history of commitment to the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED) and the collaborative's involvement in the NNER.

Keynote speaker, **Wendy Puriefoy**, president of the Public Education Network, drew on her personal history of civic involvement to remind the audience that democracy demands participation: positive change

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occurs only through faithful engagement. Her stories reminded the audience that even the smallest grass-roots activity can lead to significant change.

A special "keynote conversation" between **John Goodlad**



Tom Bellamy and **John Goodlad** provide the "keynote conversation."

and **Tom Bellamy** highlighted connections between the NNER's past and future work. The two gentlemen noted that in a vibrant network committed to a set of principles, leaders across the NNER weave participation into all the initiatives to advance the AED in our current political and social context.

Break-out sessions. Participants had 77 opportunities to interact with and learn from their colleagues. The wide range of sessions included **Kathleen Ofstedal's** demonstration of how an inquiry approach to strengthen the

mentorship program is applied at the St. Cloud setting. **Brian Cobb**, co director of a research center at Colorado State University, described an innovative approach for advancing the NNER research agenda by creating an NNER research and evaluation center. **Parthenia Satterwhite, Irma Van Scoy, and Mary Earick** traced 17 years of their professional development school partnership, providing examples of its impact on student learning and teacher preparation.

Telling tales. Using songs, musical instruments, and stories rooted in the local culture, the Mountain Stage performance at the West Virginia Cultural Center brought to life the rich diversity and struggles that continue to shape our democracy. ❖



(clockwise,, from left) **Mary Jade Haney**, Horrell Hill Elementary, art teacher/literacy-team chair; **Irma VanScoy**, associate dean, Univ. of South Carolina; **Parthenia Satterwhite**, principal, Horrell Hill Elementary; **Mary Earick**, professor, Univ. of South Carolina; **Tracee Walker**, curriculum resource teacher/clinical adjunct, Horrell Hill.

NNER Governance News

Creating & Managing Change

A Journal for the NNER

Executive Council



Greg Bernhardt, reelected chair of the governing council.

At its October 4, 2007, meeting, the NNER governing council unanimously re-elected **Greg Bernhardt**, dean of the College of Education and Communication at Wright State University, to serve a second term as chair of the council and executive board. The governing council commended Greg's proactive leadership during this period of transition for the NNER. It recognized his work as a significant factor in the network's progress toward becoming an independent not-for-profit organization. The group also cited Greg's leadership in helping to foster the continuing close relationship between the NNER and IEI as we work to advance the AED.

In other actions, the board approved a four-month transition budget for operations through December 31, 2007, and a twelve-month budget for the 2008 fiscal year beginning January 2008. Complete minutes are posted on the NNER Web page. ❖

Equity Self-Study

Julie Canniff and **Ken Jones** from the Southern Maine partnership gave a presentation on their setting's second-year piloting of the equity self-study process. Southern Maine's annual report includes detailed progress information. ❖

Establishment of an NNER journal has taken a few more steps toward reality. At the tripartite council annual meeting, **John Anderson** (University of Nebraska, Kearney) and **John Skillings** (Miami University) agreed to co-chair a committee charged with guiding the process to create an NNER journal. (Anyone interested in participating in the creation of this new journal should contact **John** at andersonj@unk.edu.) Once formed, the full committee will meet to identify a niche for the journal and develop a business plan to support the journal's publication. This plan will be submitted to the executive board next spring for consideration and possible approval.

The plan is to begin reviewing articles for the journal by next summer or early fall. The journal should be available online in time for the 2009 fall meeting of the NNER. ♦

Tri-Partite Council

Jean Eagle, **Nick Michelli**, and **John Anderson** co-facilitated the tripartite council meeting. A good-sized gathering of participants offered helpful feedback on a proposed NNER- iNET co-sponsored international policy symposium. **John Anderson** and **John Skilling** described NNER's online journal initiative (see related article on this page). Council members, working in mixed-setting groups, served as critical friends for annual-report conversations. ❖



Jennifer Robinson from Montclair State and **Jill Fox** from the University of Texas at Arlington review their settings' annual reports at the tripartite council meeting.

Special Accomplishments & Contributions Recognized at the 2007 NNER Conference

Michelli and Clark Award recipients shared their stories at the 2007 NNER Conference. Each is an exemplar of how hard work, a clear vision, and commitment to new ways of doing things continue to make possible better futures for their schools and students.

The **Michelli Award for Promoting Social Justice** was presented to Pershing Elementary School Developing Networks (DN) in Lexington, Neb. Accepting the award on behalf of the school were **Jerry Bergstrom**, principal of Pershing Elementary, and **Dennis Pothoff** and **Janelle VerMaas**, members of the Pershing DN leadership team.

The Pershing group began its DN work in 2001, and continues to be deeply involved in the community. Its goals are to create schools of social inclusion and academic excellence and to

nurture outstanding future leaders and students with an ethic of service to their communities.



Nick Michelli presents the Michelli Award to **Jerry Bergstrom**, principal, and **Janelle VerMaas**, kindergarten teacher, from Pershing Elementary School in Lexington, Neb.



Accepting the Clark Award on behalf of Paxton Keeley Elementary in Columbia, Missouri, were **Dan Lawry**, MPER co-director, **Elaine Hassemer**, Paxton Keeley principal, **Sally Widbin**, teacher/mentor at Paxton Keeley, and **Deb Carr**, MPER co-director.

The school team embraced the changing demographics and established a norm of community conversation that values different points of view and willingness to confront hard issues. Jerry described the story of his community's evolution, its challenges, and successes. (The text of Jerry's presentation is posted on the NNER Web page.)

Paxton Keeley Elementary in Columbia, Missouri, received the **Clark Award for Exemplary Partner-School Work**. An excerpt from their nomination materials illustrates the depth and quality of the partner school work:

"Now in our fifth year of operation we find it difficult to define who is having the strongest influence on whom, the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, or the Paxton Keeley faculty,

(Continued on page 7)

Richard W. Clark received the Institute for Educational Inquiry's **2007 Hummingbird Award**, which was presented by **John Goodlad** and **Carol Wilson**. In making the award they cited Dr. Clark's



Richard Clark, 2007 Hummingbird Awardee.

stewardship of schooling and teacher preparation—for "doing his part" and for caring for the well-being of others who are also "doing their parts." **Dick** joins previous Hummingbird honorees, **Bob Patterson** and **Wilma Smith**. ❖



Carol Wilson and John Goodlad prepare to present the 2007 Hummingbird Award.

Chico State University Partnership Holds Orientation: *Just what are the NNER and the Agenda for Education in a Democracy?*



Provost **Sandra Flake**, with **Phyllis Fernlund**, dean of the College of Communication and Education, and **Maggie Payne**, associate dean.

As the newest member of the NNER, California State University at Chico and its partner school districts held an orientation session, October 19-20, 2007, to introduce members to the NNER and the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. During the session more than 65 participants reflected on readings, conversed, and explored connections between ongoing initiatives and the NNER mission. Dean **Phyllis Fernlund** and Associate Dean **Maggie Payne** organized the orientation to include interactive sessions that introduced the four-part NNER mission and provided opportunities for participants to learn about the many local partner activities that relate to the NNER work.

Highlights of the session included remarks by **Paul Zingg**, Chico State president, who emphasized the critical role of education and educators in creating a path to a stronger democracy. Provost **Sandra Flake** moderated a panel discussion during which participants and facilitators from NNER settings shared and discussed the structures and activities of different partners. The session was co-facilitated by **Rod Lucero** from Colorado State University; **Claude Louishomme** from the University of Nebraska at Kearney; **Nick Michelli** from City University of New York; and **Ann Foster**, executive director of the NNER. Background on the League of Democratic Schools (LODS), an initiative of the IEL, was presented by **Dorothy Lloyd**, LODS director. ♦

Take Note

Ann Foster
Executive Director

☐ **The LTPS summer conference** for partner school leaders will be held June 25-27, 2008, in Bellevue, Wash. This working conference will focus on what, why, and how to lead in partner schools. Join your school and university colleagues to explore the challenges and benefits of partner-school leadership. The registration fee is \$300. A limited number of scholarships is available for principals new to partner-school work and for central administrators who support this important work in qualifying districts. Contact **Ann Foster** for more information: different-annf2@u.washington.edu

☐ **The NNER summer symposium** will be held July 14-18, 2008, in Seattle, Wash. Executive board members will serve as lead facilitators for this meeting, which will introduce participants to the NNER mission and to the values and strategies that advance that mission. The registration fee is \$1000.

☐ **The 2008 NNER conference** will be held in the Arlington, Texas, area and hosted by AUSNER, October 3-6, 2008. The theme, "Looking at the Past to Inform the Future," reminds us of the NNER's solid foundation as well as the need for continual renewal as we address new challenges. Look for information on the Web and in the NNER newsletter.

☐ The **NNER governing council** will meet at AACTE, Feb. 7, 1:00-4:00 at the Hilton, New Orleans Riverside Hotel, Windsor Room. ❖

One Setting's Journey

Enhancing Literacy through Simultaneous Renewal

Steve Leatham, Associate Director, CITES, BYU-Public School

A democracy demands a special kind of literacy, literacy that goes beyond simply comprehending words on a page. It requires a literacy that includes skills such as critical inquiry (*Education for Everyone*, p.8). The **Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership**, dedicated to the Agenda for Education in a Democracy, developed the Balanced Literacy initiative ten years ago to provide a framework specifically for the kind of literacy that democracy demands.

John Goodlad, in his book *Educational Renewal*, described the si-

multaneous renewal of schools and teacher education programs as “a murky journey through unmapped territory to be undertaken by travelers not accustomed to talking let alone working together” (p. 116).

A traveler would not have to look very long or hard to find examples of simultaneous renewal in the NNER settings. At Brigham Young University all one needs to do is visit any one of the partnership's 143 elementary partnership schools and utter the words “balanced literacy.” In most cases classroom

doors would open upon a scene of children learning to read and write from dedicated teachers who have spent hundreds of hours in district and university balanced-literacy training.

Balanced literacy, a framework for teaching language skills and strategies, helps students become literate participants who share responsibility for their own learning. The “balance” is not a balance of equal amounts of reading and writing, nor is it a balance of phonics and whole-language instruction. Balanced

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UPDATE:

The League of (Small) Democratic Schools

The League of Small Democratic Schools begins its fourth year under new leadership, support from a new grant, and a new name—the League of Democratic Schools (LDS). To achieve its full potential, the organization needs renewed support from institutions of higher education throughout the NNER.

New Grant. In the interim, the IEI has been awarded a grant from the Stuart Foundation of San Francisco, which will fund the first year of a three-year initiative to add schools in California and Washington. The grant will also support development of refined metrics for assessing

students' progress as they develop skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values required to function as members of a democratic society.

Who is the League? League schools include public, private, and charter schools, each of which has a partnership with a local university to further its renewal. The League is organized into three regions—western, Rocky Mountains/Plains, and eastern—and currently includes 14 schools located in Georgia, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Oregon, and Washington. It seeks to (1) promote professional development that emphasizes students' growth as individuals

who are successful members of a democratic society, and (2) help preserve schools that successfully advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy.

Future Growth. Continued progress of the League and its current partner schools depends on active support from NNER partnerships. Schools need help with professional development, assessment of students progress, and how to preserve what makes each distinctive in the midst of pressures to conform. In turn, as partners, these schools provide universities with venues for clinical experiences and for observation and

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Journey (continued from p. 5)

literacy is more like a balanced diet in which a variety of foods are included and work together to create a healthy diet. In a balanced-literacy classroom, reading and writing skills and strategies are first modeled for students. Students then share the task with the teacher and finally practice the new task independently.

Origins and outgrowths. Started in 1997 with 30 highly qualified educators selected by their district administrations, the associate dean of the BYU McKay School of Education, and five professors from teacher education, the initiative now includes 143 elementary schools. All elementary teachers in the five partner districts participate in balanced literacy professional development programs specially designed by the original 30 participants.

Balanced literacy is more like a balanced diet in which a variety of foods are included and work together to create a healthy diet.

At the same time, the McKay teacher-education faculty have aligned pre-service teacher preparation courses with the principles of balanced literacy. Student literacy practicum experiences were conducted in model balanced literacy classrooms in each of the partnership's districts. With the literacy faculty at the university participating in the initiative, all new teachers who graduate from the university complete coursework compatible with the balanced literacy curriculum that is implemented in the schools.

Balanced literacy continues as the foundation of literacy instruction throughout the partnership. It is a key factor in the success of the partnership's elementary children on the Utah State Office literacy proficiency tests as they continue to outperform the state performance levels.

After a decade of collaborative effort, the Balanced Literacy initiative is a shining example of how teacher education and public schools can engage in renewal together; but because renewal is ongoing, balanced literacy is always a work in progress. Literacy Associates, a concept patterned after the Leadership Associates Program, met monthly during the 2006-2007 academic year to revisit balanced literacy implementation and its results within the partnership since its inception ten years ago. This inquiry generated important questions and a variety of data collection options for examining the day-to-day implementation and results in classrooms. This continuing review supports balanced literacy renewal, the results of which support the continually growing numbers of teachers whose work with children contributes to the future of democracy.

For more information on the program, contact **Steve Leatham** or **Steve Baugh** at education.byu.edu/cites. ♦

Democratic Schools (continued from p. 5)

study of what are often non-traditional approaches to schooling.

Chief worrier for league activities is **Dr. Dorothy Lloyd**, who most recently served as founding dean and professor of the college of professional studies at California State University, Monterey Bay, and is a long-time colleague of John Goodlad.

More information about the league is available online at <http://www.ielseattle.org>. ♦

All League schools strive to be exemplars of the following attributes:

Democratic purpose. LDS schools believe that the primary purpose of schooling is to instill in young people the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successful participation in our nation's social and political democracy.

Student achievement. Students in such schools are successful academically and socially.

Ongoing professional development. All members of the school community engage in continuous learning.

Approaches to learning. These are schools that use a wide variety of approaches to learning including engaging students with parents and other adults in the community.

Small size. They are small enough that faculty members can gather as a group and everyone has a chance to actively participate in the discussions. ♦

Clark Award (continued from p. 3)

students, and partners. We are so interdependent and accustomed to working together that it seems odd to try to think of ourselves as separate entities."

Accepting the award were Paxton Keeley principal, **Elaine Hassemer**; **Sally Widbin**, teacher/mentor; and **Deb Carr**, and **Dan Lowry** co-directors of MPER. They exemplify the interdependence embedded in a strong partnership. For more information on their partner school activities and accomplishments contact **Elaine Hassemer**:

ehasseme@columbia.k12.mo.us

♦

Outstanding Opportunity

... for a researcher interested in policy studies

Georgia Southern University is looking for someone who would be interested in applying for the William T. Grant Foundation Distinguished Fellows Program (www.wtgrantfoundation.org). As a WMT Fellow you would study the state of our schools and the university's ability to influence state and national policy with a focus on policies having an impact on rural areas. The deadline for submitting of letter of inquiry to the foundation is January, 10, 2008. If you are interested, please contact **Dianne Bath**: dbath@georgiasouthern.edu, (912) 681- 5719. ♦

Our Quest

by Walter S. Polka

"I use this poem and others' stories related to valuing 'difference' as catalysts to assist individuals in experiencing their own 'aha' moments related to diversity and equity in education. " WSP

Several individuals have searched diligently for
Similar
patterns, structures, and expressions among
Diverse
people, things, and ideas,
In their quest for simple understanding.

Numerous others have made substantial plans to
Standardize
access, activities, and incentives among
Diverse
people, things, and ideas,
In their quest for simple understanding.

Many others have implemented forcibly with
Precision
programs, models, and assessments among
Diverse
people, things, and ideas,
In their quest for simple understanding.

Some have evaluated wrongly, and
Rigidly
knowledge, attitudes, and skills among

Diverse
people, things, and ideas,
In their quest for simple understanding.

Others have self-righteously worked to
Homogenize
languages, cultures, and beliefs among
Diverse
people, things, and ideas,
In their quest for simple understanding.

Thus, all of us must begin now to
Humanize
histories, realities, and futures among
Diverse
people, things, and ideas,
In our quest for enriched understanding.

And, each of us must genuinely try to
Appreciate
difference, uniqueness, and individuality among
Diverse
people, things, and ideas,
In our grand quest for enlightened understanding.

Dr. Walter S. Polka is an associate professor of educational leadership at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. He is also retired superintendent of schools, Lewiston-Porter Central Schools, New York. wpolka@georgiasouthern.edu

National Network for Educational Renewal



SETTING	STATE/PROVINCE
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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

National Network for Educational Renewal

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