



# Wyoming School-University Partnership January 2008

## Math instructors meet Feb. 8-9

Junior and senior high math teachers are invited to a conference with community college and university math instructors to discuss high school to higher education transitions.

[Read more ...](#)

## Partnership membership increases

The Wyoming School-University Partnership governing board is pleased to welcome Park School District #1, based in Powell, and its superintendent, Kevin Mitchell, back to the Partnership!

[Read more ...](#)

## Life sciences instructors plan for High School to Higher Ed summit

The Partnership will sponsor the third annual High School to Higher Education Summit for life sciences teachers. The focus of the 2008 summit is the discipline's big ideas, how to teach those ideas through inquiry and what student work samples reveal about enduring understandings. Register today!

[Read more ...](#)



## Woods program gives students voice in school

Students at Woods Learning Center in Casper shape their world through circle groups, a weekly multiage meeting that encourages youth to take control of their learning environments. Woods is one of Wyoming's two members of the League of Democratic Schools.

[Read more ...](#)

## The Partnership

The Wyoming School-University Partnership includes K-16 faculty and administrators statewide along with other education stakeholders. The stakeholders study and promote the role of education in preparing students for life and work in a democracy.

## Upcoming Events

**February 8-9, 2008**

Math articulation conference  
Torrington

**February 22, 2008**

Life Sciences Summit  
Casper

**February 28, 2008**

Governing Board meeting  
Cheyenne

**April 18-19, 2008**

Wyoming Writing Colloquium  
Douglas

**March 26-28, 2008**

Shepard Symposium on Social  
Justice  
Laramie

**July 14-18, 2008**

Summer Symposium  
Seattle, Washington

**October 3-6, 2008**

NNER Annual Conference  
Arlington, Texas

## Wyoming secondary, postsecondary teachers to meet at writing colloquium

Organizers in the language arts content areas have planned a spring "Teaching Writing in Wyoming" colloquium, designed to bring together instructors from multiple disciplines who teach writing at junior high, high school, community college and university levels. The featured presenter is Deborah Brandt, author of "Literacy as Involvement: The Acts of Writers, Readers and Texts" and "Literacy in American Lives."

[Read more ...](#)

## Shepard Symposium set for Laramie

Barbara Martinez Jitner will be the keynote speaker March 26-28 at the 12th annual Shepard Symposium on Social Justice in Laramie. Jitner is a Latina writer, director and television producer who helped create the first Latino family drama on broadcast television. The symposium is a nationally recognized conference that seeks to engage local students, faculty and residents in discussion on issues of social justice, particularly in the context of public education.

[Read more ...](#)

## NNER hosts summer symposium

The Partnership governing board is accepting nominations and self-nominations for participation in the annual National Network for Educational Renewal's summer symposium. The symposium focuses on the Agenda for Education in a Democracy, the four-part mission that drives simultaneous educational renewal in Wyoming's Partnership settings.

[Read more ...](#)

## Read a book, join a conversation

Interested in talking about the dilemmas that face educators at all levels? Join one of the two book discussion groups scheduled for this winter and spring!

[Read more ...](#)

## Regional summits raise issues

Educators met in regional summits across Wyoming this fall to examine student work samples and discuss science as inquiry at all levels of learning. Participants found common ground as they recognized similar challenges and a shared desire to improve classroom instruction.

[Read more ...](#)

### Useful Links

[Wyoming School-University Partnership](#)

[National Network for Educational Renewal](#)

[Wyoming National Board Certification](#)

[Institute for Educational Inquiry](#)

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## **Secondary math teachers invited to conference Feb. 8-9**

Every year, Wyoming community college and university mathematics and statistics instructors meet to talk about common concerns, especially those around curriculum, instruction and teaching innovations.

This year, a session will be devoted to high school to higher education math transition issues. Conference planners at Eastern Wyoming College in Torrington, which will host this year's meeting encourage junior high and high school math teachers to participate.

To support the meetings and encourage participation of junior and senior high mathematics instructors, the Wyoming School-University Partnership will pay the \$20 registration fees. Travel, lodging and other expenses are the responsibility of the participant. Follow the link to [www.uwyo.edu/wymatyc/](http://www.uwyo.edu/wymatyc/) to register and see the conference schedule and session titles. Direct any questions about the complimentary secondary education registrations to Audrey Kleinsasser, 307.766.6358 or [dakota@uwyo.edu](mailto:dakota@uwyo.edu).

The Feb. 8 morning session will feature three parts. UW's Linda Hutchison, associate professor of secondary mathematics education, will overview and explain the concurrent mathematics major between the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education. UW Science and Mathematics Center Director Robert Mayes will share results from a literature review he and graduate students conducted about problems students have in making the transition from high school to college-level work across math and science courses. Finally, UW mathematics professors Bryan Shader and Lynne Ipina will invite small and large group discussion around issues that Wyoming students face when making the transition to college-level work.

Other sessions include learning communities and developmental math, a concepts inventory assessment tool, student self evaluation, student response systems (clickers), Geometer sketchpad, motivating students to learn using software, interactive tools in teaching statistics, plus others. Participants may participate in a math contest and an Italian buffet Friday evening.

## **Partnership membership increases to 18 school districts**

The Wyoming School-University Partnership governing board is pleased to welcome Park School District #1, based in Powell, and its superintendent, Kevin Mitchell, back to the Partnership.

With Park #1, membership has increased to 18 school districts, or 38 percent of Wyoming's 48 districts, including 70 percent of K-12 students and all postsecondary education students in the state.

In addition to school districts, Partnership members include the Wyoming Education Association, Wyoming Department of Education, each of the seven Wyoming community colleges and UW's College of Arts & Sciences and College of Education.

School districts pay \$2,000 in membership fees annually, with renewals due Aug. 15.

## **Life sciences instructors prepare for 3rd annual summit**

The third annual, statewide life sciences summit is Feb. 22 at Casper College. The focus of the 2008 summit is the discipline's big ideas, how to teach those ideas through inquiry and what student work samples reveal about enduring understandings. As with prior summits, the focus on actual student work guides small and large group discussions.

To date, approximately 150 secondary and postsecondary life sciences teachers have participated in at least one previous summit. The upcoming Casper event builds on past statewide and regional summits. Participants focus on the difficulties students face making the transition from high school to college-level work. The summits promote better communication between educational levels and the development of positive working relationships.

The Wyoming School-University Partnership is hosting the summit with the UW Life Sciences Program and the UW Science and Math Teaching Center. Go to [www.uwyo.edu/wsup](http://www.uwyo.edu/wsup) to register. While there is no cost to participate, travel and lodging are the responsibility of the participants or their sponsoring agencies. Participants should bring examples of student work. The online registration site includes specific information about what to bring. Questions? Contact Mark Lyford at 307.766.2818 or [mahler@uwyo.edu](mailto:mahler@uwyo.edu), or Audrey Kleinsasser at 307.766.6358 or [dakota@uwyo.edu](mailto:dakota@uwyo.edu).

## Woods program gives students voice in school

One group of students at Woods Learning Center in Casper wants to make school a little more personal.

"I think it would be fun during Christmas time to talk about what we're doing, our traditions, things like that," seventh-grader McKenna Ross suggested during a group meeting in early December.

As the students talked more about the idea, they decided to make a proposal in their notebook: "Share more about ourselves."

The notebook will go to the school's staff members, who will consider ways to make the suggestion a reality and will report directly back to the students.

The system is one of the K-8 school's newest efforts to give students more voice in their education. It is a result of the school's recent decision to join the League of Democratic Schools, a nationwide network designed to support schools that emphasize the growth of students as successful members of a democratic society.

"Last year, when (fellow teacher Guy Sallade) and I attended the national meeting of the League, there was a discussion on ways to give students voice in K-8 schools," explained teacher Jennifer Grooms. "One school told us about a notebook method they use to record student concerns and questions. Appropriate sources then respond to the students' concerns."

Woods already had circle groups, clusters of about 22 students of every grade level who met weekly for games, crafts and community service. The staff decided to implement the notebook method in that system.

"Students are asked if they have concerns, celebrations or suggestions for our school," Grooms said. "Student responses are recorded in that group's notebook, usually scribed by an older (student), and notebooks are discussed periodically in our school's administrative team meetings. Students are then given feedback on their issues.

"While we are only nearing the end of one semester with our notebooks, we believe that it is proving to be a good way to provide for more student voice in our school."

Students also say the new program is working. Earlier in the year, one group suggested having a spirit week. It happened. The groups also help set and adapt rules for the school as the year proceeds.

"I'm thinking they did the notebooks to resolve problems and to have fun and start different things for circle groups," Ross said. "I've been to many schools and I think this is the best because we have a say in something. Here, we can help make rules and do what we want."

The UW Lab School in Laramie also is a member of the League of Democratic Schools. The Wyoming School-University Partnership pays for half of the League membership fee. Contact Audrey Kleinsasser at [dakota@uwyo.edu](mailto:dakota@uwyo.edu) for more information. To learn more about the League, visit [www.ieiseattle.org](http://www.ieiseattle.org).



**Students at Woods Learning Center share a meal during India Day in December. The multiage circle groups each were responsible for stations, where they taught their peers about an element of India's culture.**

## **Writing colloquium gathers teachers from across disciplines**

Encouraged by the success of recent life sciences summits, organizers in the language arts content areas have planned a spring "Teaching Writing in Wyoming" colloquium April 18 and 19 in Douglas for secondary and postsecondary instructors.

The two-day workshop is aimed at instructors from multiple disciplines grades six through 12 who teach writing at junior high, high school, community college and university levels. The featured presenter is Deborah Brandt, author of "Literacy as Involvement: The Acts of Writers, Readers and Texts," and "Literacy in American Lives."

Lodging and meals will be provided, along with opportunities for follow-up grant projects. Participants or their sponsoring agencies are responsible for travel. Professional Teaching Standards Board and UW credits will be available.

Registration is limited to 60 participants, with only a few openings remaining. Go to [www.uwyo.edu/lrn/writing.htm](http://www.uwyo.edu/lrn/writing.htm) for more information, or contact April Heaney at 307.766.3448 or [aprilh@uwyo.edu](mailto:aprilh@uwyo.edu).

Teaching Writing in Wyoming is cosponsored by UW's LeaRN: Learning Resource Networks, UW's Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning and the Wyoming School-University Partnership.

## **Shepard Symposium on Social Justice planned in Laramie**

The Partnership will serve as one of many sponsors for the 12th annual Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, March 26-28 at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. This year's keynote speaker is Barbara Martinez Jitner, a Latina writer, director and television producer who helped create the first Latino family drama on broadcast television. Jitner's work also includes several documentaries and feature films related to Latino issues, including Gregory Nava's "Bordertown," a film highlighting the mass murders of women in Juarez, Mexico.

The symposium is a nationally recognized conference that seeks to engage local students, faculty and residents in discussion on issues of social justice, particularly in the context of public education. In 2006, the SSSJ was awarded the prestigious Nicholas Michelli Award for Promoting Social Justice by the National Network for Educational Renewal. The award recognizes NNER settings for their work in promoting social justice as described in the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. Support of the symposium reflects the Partnership's commitment to social justice and to providing all students with equitable access to the skills and knowledge necessary for life and work in a democracy.

For additional information and online registration, please visit [www.shepardsymposium.org](http://www.shepardsymposium.org) or e-mail [cse\\_coordinator3@uwyo.edu](mailto:cse_coordinator3@uwyo.edu).

## **NNER hosts summer symposium; nominations welcome**

The Partnership governing board is accepting nominations and self-nominations for participation in the annual National Network for Educational Renewal's summer symposium, July 14 to 18 in Seattle. If you are interested, please contact Partnership Director Audrey Kleinsasser at 307.766.6358 or [dakota@uwyo.edu](mailto:dakota@uwyo.edu) by Feb. 15. Participants include teachers, principals and other administrators who represent school-university partnership settings from across the nation and Canada.

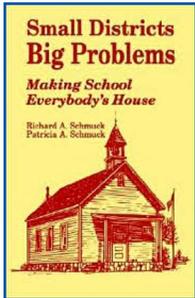
The purpose of the symposium is to better understand the Agenda for Education in a Democracy, the four-part mission that drives simultaneous educational renewal in Wyoming's partnership settings. Participants read three or four books in advance of the meetings. Past selections have included "First Democracy," "Education for Everyone: Agenda for Education in a Democracy," "Democracy," "Teacher Education for Democracy and Social Justice," and "Educational Metamorphoses."

Registration for the week-long set of meetings is \$1,000 with lodging and travel the responsibility of the participants. The Partnership has been supporting the participation of four from the Wyoming setting with \$500 scholarships per registrant. The Wyoming setting will send a team that includes elementary, secondary and postsecondary (arts and sciences and education) representatives.

## Read a book, join a statewide multilevel conversation

Interested in talking about dilemmas that face educators at all levels and those who care about education? Interested in hearing what people think whose role in education is different from yours?

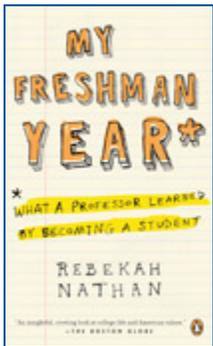
Join a discussion group this winter! There is no cost and no travel. All you need is a telephone and an e-mail address. Two books will be discussed via conference call. We will send you a copy of the book and e-mail the toll-free number to call for participation. Registration will be limited to 20. If we have enough interest, we will run a second group at a later date. **Registration closes Feb. 5.**



### **"Small Districts Big Problems: Making School Everybody's House"**

Although Richard and Patricia Schmuck wrote this book more than 15 years ago, the dilemmas they describe endure. The Schmucks spent six months visiting 80 schools in 25 small school districts in 21 states. In this highly readable book, their research features portraits of students, teachers, principals, superintendents and school board members. The authors address issues of school-community identity and the important issue of democratic participation. Think your school and community might be different? Join the conversation and find out!

The first discussion (about half of the book) is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 26 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The second discussion (the rest of the book) will occur Tuesday, March 25, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Each discussion will occur via conference call using a toll-free number. For more information and the online registration form, please follow the link to [www.uwyo.edu/wsup](http://www.uwyo.edu/wsup).



### **"My Freshman Year," follow up to the 2007 Fall Conference**

Last October, the Partnership co-sponsored the highly successful visit of author Cathy Small to Laramie in conjunction with the fall Wyoming School-University Partnership conference. Small wrote "My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student," her account of returning to college for a year as a full-time student. The book is a great read, interesting and thought provoking. Small has some strong recommendations that are helpful to teachers at all levels and to the parents of college-age students.

For this follow up conversation, we invite anyone who read the book to participate in a one-hour conversation Monday, Feb. 11, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. We are interested to know what, if anything, you are doing different as a result of reading the book and participating in the fall conference. Have you changed assignments? Revised a course outline? Are you talking differently with students about college experiences? There is no cost to participate and the conversation will occur via conference call using a toll-free number.

Follow the link to [www.uwyo.edu](http://www.uwyo.edu) to register.

## Regional summits across Wyoming raise issues

Following the success of two statewide life sciences summits, planners created three regional summits to involve more educators. The focus was *Science as Inquiry*, one of the Wyoming state teaching standards. Participants at each summit were asked to bring examples of student work that represented high, medium and low quality.

Sylvia Parker from the UW Science and Mathematics Teaching Center facilitated mixed, small group conversations for participants to compare evidence of the *Science as Inquiry* standard across high school, community college and university settings.

Planners collected evaluation information from each of the summits with four main themes emerging. Participants:

- \* valued sharing and discussing student learning expectations;
- \* recognized common problems and the challenge of motivating and engaging students;
- \* desired to improve classroom instruction and to develop effective strategies; and
- \* needed better communication and wanted to keep the conversations going.

The regional summits occurred in Worland, Evanston and Gillette and involved 71 participants, 62 percent K-12, 8 percent community college and 30 percent UW. The largest turnout occurred in Gillette, which had 34 participants.

The two statewide and three regional life sciences summits were supported by the UW President's Office to advance the work around more successful high school to higher education transitions. The life sciences summits were hosted by the Wyoming School-University Partnership, the UW Life Sciences Program, the UW Science and Mathematics Teaching Center and the host school districts: Washakie #1, Evanston #1 and Campbell #1 (all Partnership members).

See related stories in this newsletter about the upcoming third annual **life sciences** state summit and a **writing colloquium** set for Douglas in April.