



Wyoming School-University Partnership May 2007

K-12, Wyoming community college and University of Wyoming science faculty are working together to make sure curriculum aligns and students are provided realistic and supportive transitions between education levels. K-12 teachers joined university and community college faculty to examine student work in biology as part of the High School to Higher Education Transitions program in February.



In this issue ...

Partner schools invited to summer retreat

K-12 faculty and administrators and University of Wyoming faculty are invited to come together for a retreat to discuss collaborative professional development.

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Join now: League of Small Democratic Schools

The League of Small Democratic Schools is accepting applications for new members. The League provides professional development and support for small schools that place value on collaborative teaching and learning.

[Read more ...](#)

Get ready for fall NNER conference

The annual NNER Conference is Oct. 3-6 in Charleston, WV, and proposals are currently being accepted for programs.

[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

June 20-21

Day on the Hill
Washington D.C.

June 28-29, 2007

Leadership Institute
Casper College

July 16, 2007

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Partnership Governing
Board Meeting
UW Outreach Center
Casper

July 30 - August 1, 2007

Workshop: Professional
Learning Communities Faculties
Featuring Lee Teitel, author of
*The Professional Development
Schools Handbook*
UW Recreational Camp
Centennial

October 3-6, 2007

2007 NNER Annual Conference
University of West Virginia
Charleston, WV

October 18-19, 2007

Fall 2007 Partnership
Conference
Featuring Cathy Small, author
of *My Freshman Year*
Laramie

Editorial: What education means for democracy

Partnership Director Audrey Kleinsasser and UW/CC Dean Brent Pickett explore what educators need to know about developing citizens.

[Read more ...](#)

Wyoming educators prepare for Summer Symposium

Four Wyoming educators head to Seattle in July to participate in the National Network for Educational Renewal's Summer Symposium, where they will explore in depth the Agenda for Education in a Democracy.

[Read more ...](#)

'Day on the Hill' features talks with Wyoming delegation

Wyoming educators will represent the Partnership in Washington, D.C., in June. Educators from around the country will meet with legislators and staff members to discuss pending legislation and local education.

[Read more ...](#)

Register for the 2007 Leadership Institute

Join educators and others from Partnership districts for a two-day meeting to explore the core purpose of Partnership initiatives.

[Read more ...](#)

State Scholars Initiative moves forward

The Wyoming State Scholars Initiative is moving forward in building business and education partnerships to recognize students who complete the Hathaway Success Curriculum.

[Read more ...](#)



In-service teacher Jeff Pebbles reads to his class of kindergartners at Manor Heights Elementary School in Casper on May 3.

Useful Links

[Wyoming School-University Partnership](#)

[National Network for Educational Renewal](#)

[Wyoming National Board Certification](#)

[Wyoming Partnership for Civic Education](#)

[Institute for Educational Inquiry](#)

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Partner schools invited to summer retreat

A Partner School Retreat is designed to bring together K-12 faculty and administrators and University of Wyoming faculty who work together in partner schools for a collaborative, enjoyable experience that will further and deepen their common work. The retreat will be held July 30 to Aug. 1 at UW's Recreation Camp near Centennial, Wyo.

Lee Teitel, well-known for his work around professional development schools, will be the retreat's keynote speaker. Registrants will receive a copy of his book, *The Professional Development Schools Handbook*.

Register online no later than July 1 by going to <http://www.uwyo.edu/partnerschools/>. Professional Teaching Standards Board credit will be available.

Retreat planning committee members include Deb Parkinson, Leslie Rush, Carolyn Taylor and Kate Welsh, UW methods faculty members who work with student teachers.

Join now: League of Small Democratic Schools

The League of Small Democratic Schools is accepting new members -- and your school could be next!

The League started in 2004 as a program of the Institute for Educational Inquiry. It consists of schools that pursue the characteristics of democratic purpose, student achievement, ongoing professional development, approaches to learning, small size and governance.

The League works to promote professional development in schools that are committed to the growth of students as successful members of democratic society and to preserve schools that advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy.

Three Wyoming schools were among the charter members of the League: Meeteetse School, the University of Wyoming Lab School, and Velma Linford Elementary in Laramie. Current Wyoming members include the Lab School and Woods Learning Center in Casper, which joined this fall.

Annual membership dues are \$500, and the Wyoming School-University Partnership will pay half that for schools whose districts belong to the Partnership. For more information on Partnership support, contact Audrey Kleinsasser at (307) 766-6358 or by e-mail at dakota@uwyo.edu. For more on the League, contact Richard W. Clark at the Institute for Educational Inquiry in Seattle by phone at (425) 747-3280 or by e-mail at rwcuw@msn.com.

Get ready for fall NNER conference

The National Network for Educational Renewal is accepting presentation proposals for its 2007 annual conference, to be held Oct. 3-6 in Charleston, West Virginia. Proposals are due June 14.

The theme of this year's NNER conference is Building Bridges to Sustain Simultaneous Renewal: Philosophy to Practice, Practice to Policy, Urban to Rural. Strands in the conference include:

- * Bridging the NNER's past, present and future;
- * Bridging challenges and opportunities in rural and urban schooling
- * Bridging philosophy and ideology with practice
- * Bridging democratic practice, inquiry and education policy to support simultaneous renewal.

All sessions will be 45 minutes long. Proposals should include a presentation title at the top of the page, identify the conference strand being addressed, list the full names and institutional affiliations of all presenters and include a narrative of the proposal.

For more information on proposal submissions, or to learn more about the conference, visit <http://depts.washington.edu/cedren/nnr/index.htm>

Editorial: What education means for democracy

By Audrey Kleinsasser and Brent Pickett

As a nation we spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year on K-16 education. Whether educators like it or not, what those institutions teach and how they work convey powerful messages about values and self-government. Rather than engaging in civic education implicitly, it is better if educators are reflective about the norms and values they teach and embody every day. This is just as true for colleges and universities as it is for primary and secondary schools.

For a little more than ten years, the Wyoming School-University Partnership has sponsored a leadership program that focuses on the principles of education in a democracy. The Partnership is a consortium that includes all of the major players in Wyoming's formal and public education network. Its initiatives define school as a place to practice being a citizen. They emphasize equity in educational experiences, effective teaching practices, and stewardship of the educational setting.

The leadership program includes K-12, community college, and university faculty and administrators. Over the years, journalists and school board members also have participated. We usually plan the meetings to span several days, including an overnight stay and at least three meal times. That way, participants might create some distance between pressing work and personal obligations and the intellectual and socio-emotional challenges of the leadership program.

Carefully structured activities put participants in genuine conversations with each other. As Terry Tempest Williams has suggested in her book *The Open Space of Democracy*, we solve problems in a democracy through conversation. In evaluations of the program, participants tell us that the conversations are demanding, valuable, and exhilarating.

One constant feature in our program is reading. Participants receive a generous packet of materials that includes at least one book and numerous articles. Although we change the readings to keep current, there's one assignment we intend to keep, selections from the *Federalist Papers*. Without fail, almost all participants dread the assignment. Once we're in conversation, participants become enthusiastic about its significance to the central purpose of schooling in a democracy: preparing citizens. The *Federalist Papers* are the foremost defense and explication of the U.S. Constitution. The two principal authors of the *Papers*, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, were also central architects of the Constitution.

The *Papers* also offer profound reflections about enduring political issues. The goal of the reading and discussion is not to urge fidelity to the Founders' vision. In fact, the *Federalist Papers* clearly show that the founding era was a time of argument; after all, they were written in response to numerous criticisms of the Constitution by the Anti-Federalists. Instead, one goal of the readings and discussions is to better understand the arguments of the founding era in order to improve our political discussions today.

Ultimately our conversations are about how educational practices should work towards improving democracy. Two questions are essential. What sort of skills and habits of character, and what sorts of knowledge, are important for our citizens to have in order to maintain and improve our system of representative government? How do we best cultivate that knowledge and those skills and habits?

The answers to these questions are obviously complex. What educators should do clearly varies by grade level, but just as importantly it varies by how we understand democracy. For some, self-government emphasizes majority rule. For others, individual rights and minority veto power are essential. Furthermore, it is important for educators, including administrators, to be mindful that the way schools are run plays a powerful role in civic education. A school with male administrators but primarily female teachers and staff sends an implicit message about gender roles. A school that solves problems in a collaborative fashion sends a different message than one with a rigid, top-down approach.

Over the last two years, Wyoming legislators and educators at all levels have devoted enormous energy to creating the Hathaway scholarship program and its central feature, a

success curriculum. Thank you to those legislators and bravo to everyone in public schools, the Wyoming Department of Education, the community colleges, and the university who work together to craft the details. We must not forget that the central purpose of schooling is the preparation of citizens. Opportunities like the Partnership's leadership program enable educators and others to put their work in the context of this larger purpose.

Audrey Kleinsasser directs the Wyoming School-University Partnership. Brent Pickett is the associate dean and director of the University of Wyoming Casper College Center. Both are UW professors.

Wyoming educators prepare for Summer Symposium

Four educators from Partnership districts and the university will participate in the National Network for Educational Renewal's (NNER) Summer Symposium, July 16-20 in Seattle. They include Chris Bolender, Natrona County High School assistant principal; Anne LaPlante, Natrona County School District professional development coordinator; Robert Mayes, UW Science & Math Teaching Center director; and Brian Recht, Albany County superintendent of schools. Educators from public schools, colleges of arts and sciences and education, and community members throughout the network will participate.

One hallmark of the symposium is a hefty reading list to complete in advance. This year, participants will read *Education for Everyone*, by Goodlad, Bromley and Goodlad; *Educational Metamorphoses* by Jane Roland Martin; and *Teacher Education for Democracy and Social Justice* by Nicholas Michelli and David Keiser (editors). Activities will include a community democracy exploration with follow-up presentations, interactive small group sessions and a conversation with John Goodlad on the Roland Martin book.

The Partnership pays for half of the \$1,000 individual registration fee while the participant's sponsoring institution pays half of the fee, travel and lodging.

More than 60 Wyoming educators have participated in the Seattle-based leadership institutes and symposia since 1996. The experience creates networking opportunities with other NNER sites and a much deepened understanding of the NNER's Agenda for Education in a Democracy.

'Day on the Hill' features talks with Wyoming delegation

Mick Wiest of Douglas, Marty Wood of Torrington and Pat McClurg, dean of the UW College of Education, will represent the Partnership at the third annual American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE)-sponsored "Day on the Hill," June 20-21 in Washington, D.C.

Day on the Hill activities include meetings with legislators and their staff members. Attendees receive updates about pending legislation and interact with other educators from around the country. The meeting is a good opportunity to help legislators understand what happens at the classroom level.

This year's focus is high quality teachers for the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) disciplines. For more information about the meeting go to <http://aacte.org/> and click on "AACTE's Third Annual Day on the Hill." The Partnership has committed \$2,000 toward lodging, travel and registration for Wiest and Wood.

Register for the 2007 Leadership Institute

Join educators and others from Partnership districts for a two-day meeting that explains and develops the core purpose of Partnership initiatives.

The Leadership Institute: Agenda for Education in a Democracy will be June 28 and 29 in Casper.

In advance of the meetings, participants will have several articles to read, along with selections from the book, *Education for Everyone*.

Once again, we will feature UW/Casper College Center political philosopher Brent Pickett, who will lead discussions around three of the *Federalist Papers* (#10, 48, 51). As with past institutes, PTSB credit and university credit will be available.

Go to www.uwyo.edu/wsup to register online. Registration closes May 25 and packets will be mailed to registrants immediately thereafter.

State Scholars Initiative moves forward

Sheila Martin has been directing the Wyoming State Scholars Initiative for nearly two months, assisted by Project Manager Melanie Drever.

The SSI is a two-year, \$300,000 initiative involving business and education. The goals of the initiative are to increase the number of students who take a rigorous curriculum in Wyoming high schools and to help develop smoother transitions between secondary and post-secondary education and the workforce.

Four school districts in Wyoming, all Partnership members, already are involved in the initiative with memoranda of agreement and mini-grant contracts. They include Fremont #25, Natrona #1, Niobrara #1 and Sheridan #2.

Students who already have completed the SSI course requirements in these districts are being identified to receive Wyoming Scholars medals, certificates of achievement and "Wyoming Scholar" notations on their transcripts.

SSI also is in the process of working with the districts and the Wyoming Department of Education to collect college data, publicize the initiative and identify community resources, as well as cooperate with business partners to motivate students to take the SSI core curriculum, which is similar to the Hathaway Success Curriculum.

In other efforts, Martin is planning a September kick-off, likely in front of the Capitol Building in Cheyenne, for the Wyoming SSI. She also recently joined a Wyoming state team at the Office of Vocational and Adult Education-sponsored regional institute in Chicago to discuss ways to ease student transitions between secondary and post-secondary education, and between post-secondary education and employment. The team developed recommendations for creating a system of Wyoming Career Cluster "operational teams" that will provide leadership in the initial design of the Wyoming Career Cluster programs of study frameworks.

For more information about Wyoming's SSI project, contact Sheila Martin at missusmoose@lonetree.com or Melanie Drever at meldrever@mac.com. Sheila's cell phone number is 307-286-1161. The Web site address for the Wyoming P-16 Council, home of the initiative, is <http://www.wp-16.org/contact.asp>.