

THE PARTNERSHIP

A NEWSLETTER OF THE WYOMING SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



Breakfast of Champions



Photo by Ken Hampton, NCSD Mentor Teacher

*The Natrona County School District welcomes its new faculty in August with the annual New Teacher Breakfast and Orientation. This year's event, held on the same day as the kickoff of the 2008 Olympics, had an Olympic theme. NCSD students paraded into the event carrying signs representing each school, and every principal introduced their new faculty members to the group during a breakfast. **Read more about how other Wyoming school districts welcome new teachers to the profession and about an upcoming Wyoming event focusing on supporting new teachers, Page 4-5.***

P-16 strand offered at UW Fall Forum

Partnership provides free registration, some meals and lodging; sign up online

For the second year, the Wyoming School-University Partnership will join the University of Wyoming Assessment Coordinators Committee to co-sponsor a strand at the university's Fall Forum on Learning and Assessment. The purpose of P-16 strand is to improve the quality of student work and ease the transition from high school to college.

Karen Oates, deputy director of undergraduate education for the National Science Foundation in Washington D.C., is the plenary

speaker.

The Oct. 19-20 sessions are designed for P-16 participants, especially classroom teachers, middle-secondary school reading and writing specialists, media specialists, and first- and second-year college and university faculty.

The P-16 strand begins Sunday evening with a 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. working dinner.

Monday's sessions include a content reading workshop, Oates' plenary talk, "The Obligation of Knowledge,"

and a panel discussion on scientific literacies. The two-day strand wraps up at 4:30 p.m.

Go to www.uwyo.edu/wsups for the schedule, meeting locations, and online registration. Registration, some meals, and Sunday night's lodging are provided at no cost by the Wyoming School-Partnership. UW and Professional Teaching Standards Board credit will be available.

Questions? Contact Tara Reiter-Marolf at 307.766.3274 or e-mail treiterm@uwyo.edu

Partner districts support future educators

By Marcia Patton

Partner School Facilitator, NCSD #1

This is my third year as the University of Wyoming Partner School Facilitator for Natrona County School District #1.

Each year the Partnership has grown, and, as we work together, the challenges propel us forward. For fall semester, we currently have 45 elementary education pre-residents placed in six partner schools, with some “overflow” help from four other elementary schools who might like to eventually become part of the partnership. In spring of 2009, there will be 38 secondary residents teaching in our four secondary partner schools. Thanks to university faculty, school district personnel, resident students, and a supportive community, this has become a very positive and productive partnership.

Natrona County Schools serve more than 11,500 students in 29 elementary schools, seven junior high/middle schools, and four high schools. The elementary schools include K-sixth grades; junior/middles serve sixth through ninth; and students in ninth-12th grade attend the high schools.

In addition to sixth and ninth grade choices of school type, NCSD #1 promotes open enrollment, enforcing the belief that no one school meets the needs of all children, and that families may take an active role in their students’ education through open enrollment.

The UW/Casper College Center residents who are currently placed with teachers in the elementary schools are actually in their pre-service semester. If everything goes well, their spring residency semester

will be in the same classroom with the same mentor, and they will step seamlessly into their role of team teaching those students. Instruction for this program is provided by Elementary Education Department Chair Dr. Alan Buss, UW/Casper College Center Elementary Education Faculty, and Dr. Brent Pickett, associate dean of UW/Casper College Center. Pre-residents are asked to complete a minimum of 35 contact hours, yet nearly all students are in the classroom for double or triple that time allotment. Some of the experiences required for pre-residency include: helping the mentor teacher prepare the classroom the week before students arrive, participating in the first days of student contact, observing two individual parent/teacher conferences, meeting with mentors for collaborative lesson planning and professional development activities, and assisting in the classroom a minimum of once a week. The pre-service teachers support each other as a cohort group within the



First-grade teacher Betty Kelly, back, and pre-resident teaching student Kellie Mantei welcome students back from recess during the first week of classes at Manor Heights Elementary School in Casper.

building, and become an integral part of the school community before their actual residency semester begins.

During the spring semester, in addition to individual classroom experiences, partner schools provide in-service training and make other building and districtwide opportunities available to the resident teachers.

Our secondary residents are primarily placed at Natrona County High School, Kelly Walsh High School, Centennial Junior High, and CY Junior High. UW/

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Fanning and Ellsworth join teacher prep

This past August, Debbie Fanning, left, began work as the Albany County partner school facilitator. Judy Ellsworth, right, serves as the acting director of the Office of Teacher Education and is also a UW associate professor of elementary education.



Partner School Facilitators

Albany County School District #1
Debbie Fanning

Fremont County
School Districts #14 and #25
Chris Watne

Natrona County School District #1
Marcia Patton

Sheridan County School District #1
Kristi Von Krosigk

Sweetwater County
School Districts #1 and 2
Kathy Bruce

MENTORS, continued from 2

Casper College Center science and technology students are placed in Casper for their residency semester, and there are additional science as well as English, math, social studies, languages, and art resident teachers from the Laramie Campus of the University of Wyoming. Dr. Linda Hutchison and her faculty actually fly to Casper every other week to supervise students in the classroom. While they are here, UW faculty work together with classroom mentors and residents to deliver instruction and enrichment activities to Natrona County students. Many times there will be UW faculty, NCSD faculty, and multiple resident teachers all working in the same classroom. Natrona students benefit from multiple team teaching, and the UW and NCSD faculty and residents learn from each other. It is a powerful concept, and it works!

Partner School Facilitator responsibilities include

communication between the University College of Education, Natrona County School District #1 administration and personnel, and the education students. I serve as a mentor and advocate for the residents as they work in the schools, drawing on my own 34 years of teaching experience. The first week of August I am in the schools welcoming the new hires who have graduated from our program. During the second week, when continuing staff arrives, I am in each building weekly, communicating with the mentors and leading the pre-residents. Fall semester includes the crucial mentor/resident workshops, in addition to school visits and resident seminars on topics such as classroom management, special education, and district expectations. My role during spring semester includes school resident cohort group meetings, seminars, and lots of attention to individual residents. There are facilitator classroom visits to complement UW faculty visits on alternating weeks, or when a student

needs extra supervision. In addition to direction with resumés and job applications, I assist in planning graduation festivities, including mentor appreciation activities. A crucial spring project is convening UW faculty and school district personnel to identify mentors and make appropriate placements for the next school year. Facilitator life is busy, but the rewards are great in working with the next generation of talented young educators.

None of this could happen without tremendous support from many people. The Natrona County Partnership has been nurtured and guided by Dr. Kay Persichitte, Dean of the College of Education, and by Dr. Jim Lowham, past Natrona County School Superintendent. Dr. Joel Dvorak, the district's new superintendent, will carry forward this vision and leadership. Lynn Kahler, who recently took a position as interim principal at Sagewood Elementary School, has been instrumental in assisting in her former role as mentor supervisor.

Welcome! Now, teach!

A look at how Wyoming school districts
welcome new teachers to the profession . . .
and try to keep them in it

Educator, author, and activist Jonathan Kozol's new book, "Letters to a Young Teacher," guides a first-year teacher through a series of correspondence. Like many of Kozol's works, this book points beyond an individual story, though, and looks at a deeper issue; in this case, the way new teachers are welcomed and supported as they begin their professional careers.

According to the National Education Association, public schools in the United States will recruit more than 2 million new teachers in the next 10 years. But today, only about 50 percent of all new teachers are choosing to stay in the profession more than five years. In Wyoming, high teacher salaries are leading more teachers to stay in the profession and drawing experienced job candidates from around the country. Still, many new hires are recent college graduates, just entering the teaching profession. The Campbell County School District in Gillette, for example, hired 39 new, first-year teachers for the 2008-09 school year, while Converse #1 in Douglas hired 11 first-years.

Kozol himself will visit Wyoming next month as keynote speaker at the second annual Teaching and Learning Symposium, sponsored by the UW College of Education through the John P. "Jack" Ellbogen Foundation. He speaks from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, October 10, at the University of Wyoming.

In the meantime, the following two vignettes explore the efforts some Wyoming school districts are making to support their new hires and help create the best possible teachers for Wyoming's youth.



Author Jonathan Kozol will be the keynote speaker at a symposium in Laramie on October 10. His appearance is scheduled from 4 to 8 p.m.

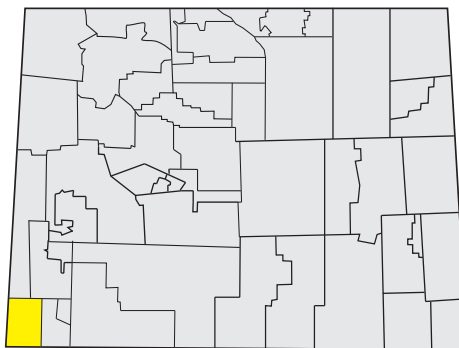
Uinta County School District #1 Evanston, Wyoming

In this school district, "new" teachers aren't just first-years. Dr. Patty Willoughby, induction coordinator for the Uinta County School District #1, works closely with every new-to-the-profession teacher for their first three years with the district.

Willoughby hosts after-school in-services monthly for each new "class" of teachers. In addition, she conducts classroom observations with each new teacher regularly, visiting first-year teachers about once a month, and the others about every six weeks.

"I go to the classrooms, watch them, videotape them, then have follow-up conferences," she said.

At each level, the induction program focuses on different skills and priorities. In the first year, the focus is primarily classroom management and student engagement. The second year continues these themes, while adding work on unit design and classroom learning. Finally, in the third year, new teachers work on



See UINTA, page 5

Laramie County School District #1 Cheyenne, Wyoming

Tina Troutt believes relationships are key.

The assistant principal at McCormick Junior High School in Cheyenne, Troutt also leads the mentoring program for Laramie County School District #1.

“One of our district goals is the human connection, and that’s both between teachers and their students and families, and with each other,” she said.

The district’s mentoring program for new teachers, therefore, is built upon solid relationships between professionals.

By contract, the district provides every first-year, new-to-the-profession teacher with a district-trained mentor in their own school. The mentors are full-time teachers who take time out of their lives to complete Pathwise training and provide observation, feedback, and support for their new coworkers.

During a new teacher’s first year, mentors work with their protégés on classroom management and building relationships with students.

The mentor teacher observes classroom practices and provides evidence and feedback for what they saw, Troutt said. The mentor uses the same rubric as the district’s teacher evaluations, helping strengthen the new teacher’s skills. But mentors don’t do evaluations.

“We train mentors in coaching skills,” she explained. “They are a coach, confidante, and friend. Many of the relationships extend past the mentor period.”

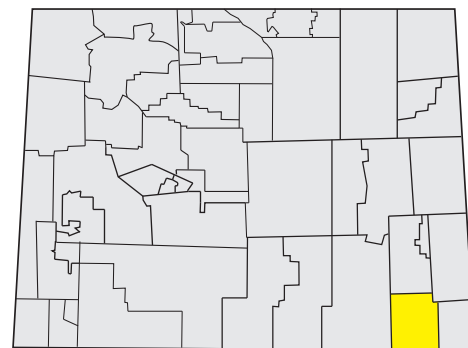
New teachers and mentors can choose to formally extend the relationship into a second year, when they focus more on growing as a professional and analyzing student work.

Troutt said she believes the mentoring relationship is imperative to helping new teachers transition into their careers and stay there.

“One of our goals is to retain new teachers. Our statistics are showing the program is working. We’re losing fewer new, first-year teachers, and I attribute that to work with mentors,” she said.

“I think we need to remember that teaching is the only profession we just throw people into. Doctors, lawyers, they have residencies and internships. Teachers are expected to be masters their first day.

“Mentoring gives them the support system to make it.”



UINTA, continued from page 4

professionalism, paying particular attention to the portfolios they create on the way to seek continuing contracts with the district.

The program began three years ago, Willoughby said, in an effort to provide new teachers with the support needed to retain them in the profession and to build a staff of highly-skilled teachers.

“I really wish I would have had something like this (when I started),” Willoughby said, explaining that she is available to help new teachers with everything from finding copy paper to working through pedagogical questions.

“The research tells us that teachers leave the profession because they don’t feel they are supported,” she said. “There’s on-the-job training, but there isn’t really a honeymoon period. You have to be ready the first day on the job, because the kids come in.

“It’s about making sure they feel like this is something they can do, that they didn’t waste four or five years in college and feel like it’s something they don’t like just because of little things they can’t control.”

Trish Cook becomes new Partnership chair

Trish Cook, curriculum director of Converse County School District #1, is the new chair of the Wyoming School-University Partnership.



school to college transitions,” she said.

“One thing I would like to see continue to be discussed and revitalized is the discussion of the importance of diversity and how diversity issues play out within the community of Wyoming.”

Persichitte leads UW College of Education

Kay A. Persichitte, director of teacher education at the University of Wyoming since 2003, is the new dean of the university’s College of Education.

Persichitte succeeds Patricia McClurg, who retired at the end of the 2007-08 school year.

“I am very fortunate to become dean of a college that has such a

great history of strong preparation programs for teachers and other professionals,” Persichitte said.

Since coming to UW from the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in Greeley, Persichitte has guided the university’s teacher education program. Her responsibilities have included administration and review of programs, accreditation, budgeting, personnel and policy.

“I believe there is a bright future for the College Education, our students and our partnerships across the vast scope of our responsibility,” she said.



Durkee to work with State Scholars Initiative

P-16 Education Council creates course comparison charts

John Durkee, retired Albany County speech and English teacher and Wyoming Department of Education consultant, recently joined the Wyoming P-16 Education Council staff. Durkee will serve as Program Coordinator for the Wyoming State Scholars Initiative. He and Glenda Tucker, the Program Director, are actively working on fall activities focused on five school districts: Big Horn #3, Fremont #25, Laramie #2 Natrona #1, Niobrara #1.

The Wyoming P-16 Education Council held a retreat on August 4 and 5, 2008 in Centennial Wyoming which proved to be very successful. The kickoff speakers,

David Longanecker, President of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and Terese Rainwater, Ph.D., Program Director for the National State Scholars Initiative, presented very useful information that established the groundwork for the remainder of the retreat. Mr. Longanecker provided a global view of what P-16 Councils are doing and discussed best practices of P-16 Councils throughout the United States. Dr. Rainwater provided an overview of the State Scholars Initiative and discussed the important role of business leader participation in the Initiative.

The four working groups of the Council, Data, Communication, Transition and Sustainability, took advantage of the opportunity

to meet with the full council regarding goals and projects for the upcoming year. The transition committee presented a final draft of the secondary and postsecondary mathematics course comparison chart that they will showcase at the fall NCA School Improvement Conference, September 29-30 in Cheyenne, along with parallel charts for world languages and writing.

A proposal from the Council to present to attendees at the NCA School Improvement Conference this fall was accepted and will provide council members the opportunity to meet with teachers and administrators from across the state. The presentation will provide an update on the activities of the P-16 Council and the Wyoming State Scholars Initiative.

Wyoming educators will present at NNER conference

The Wyoming School-University Partnership will be well-represented at the three-day annual NNER meeting hosted by the University of Texas at Arlington and the Arlington University-School Network for Educational Renewal project.

Partnership Chair Trish Cook will be there to attend Governing Council meetings. Dave Barker, Audrey Kleinsasser, and Audrey Shalinsky serve on the Tripartite Council, which also will meet.

Jennifer Grooms of Woods Learning Center and Cammy Rowley of Casper College will present a session titled "Informing and Practicing for the Future: K-8 Multiage Small Group Communities.

Jenni Luckett, Partnership

communications consultant, is leading a session with Kleinsasser called "Illuminating the AED: One School-University Partnership's Communications Strategy."

Mark Lyford, Sylvia Parker, and Kleinsasser will share their work in the session, "Fostering Student Success in the Life Sciences: A Secondary-Postsecondary Model of Collaboration Centered on Student Work."

Lyford and Parker also have a session called "Students as Citizen Scientists: Developing Democratic Values and Skills while Learning Science."

Tim Blum, DJ Yocom, and Carol Bryant are presenting, "Democracy in Education: Involving School Partnerships."

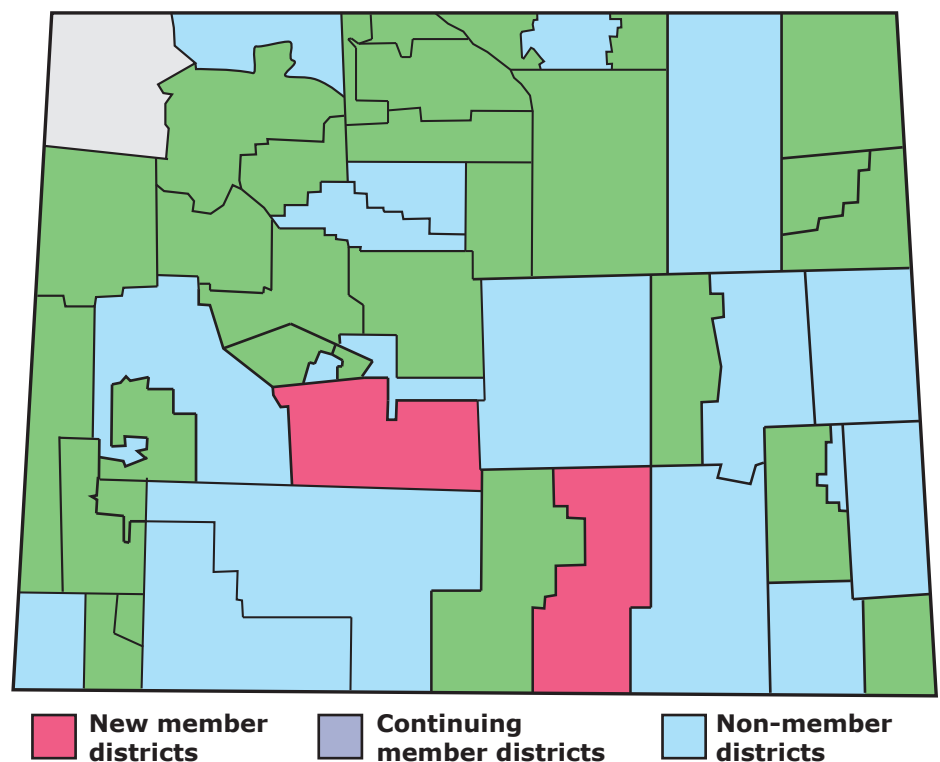


The 2008 conference strands reflect lessons learned from challenges and opportunities faced in partnership settings as they pursue the work of the NNER and the Agenda for Democracy in Education. The 2008 conference strands include: Paving the Way - Revisiting our History; Working Together - Reflecting on Current Research, Policies and Practices; and Looking to the Future - Considering Possibilities for the Times Ahead.

2 districts join Partnership

Two school districts joined the Partnership for the 2008-2009 membership year. Superintendents Bob Gates, Carbon County School District #2, and Paige Fenton-Hughes, Fremont County School District #1, will join the governing board. The board now represents 20 Wyoming school districts leaders, the Wyoming Department of Education, the Wyoming Education Association, all of the state's community colleges, and the UW College of Arts & Sciences and College of Education. Membership represents 44 percent of school districts, or more than 70 percent of PK-12 students, and all of postsecondary education.

School districts are assessed \$2,500 per year, while each community



college pays \$500. The WDE pays \$4,500 and the WEA and College of Arts & Sciences pay \$2,000. The College of Education supports the

salary of the director and half of the office associate, and provides office space. The Partnership was established in 1986.

Rios directs UW Social Justice Research Center

The University of Wyoming initiated a new Social Justice Research Center late in 2007. Francisco Rios, professor in educational studies is the center's first director. Rios also is one of Wyoming's Agenda for Education in a Democracy scholars and active in the Goodlad Institute based in Seattle.

Going on its second year, the center is an interdisciplinary center dedicated to the generation of scholarship connected to addressing practical and theoretical questions arising from the pursuit of social justice. The center also cultivates social justice oriented scholarship in the belief that when any segment

or community experiences injustice, democratic ideals are at risk. As the center expands its scope, K-12 educators will be involved as well.

UW's Social Justice Research Center supports research scholars (faculty, staff and students) by providing opportunities for collegial exchange, professional development, and financial sponsorship. The goals of the center include: a) production and dissemination of research which has a social justice profile; b) outreach to research possibilities around the state and region while expressly recognizing the interconnectedness of local, national, and global concerns; c)

intellectual exchange rooted in critical analysis; d) constructive dialogue undertaken in a climate of respect; and e) serve as a catalyst for grant funding related to the purposes of the Social Justice Research Center and given the problem-based nature of research, the generation of knowledge that will contribute to the development of broad meaningful solutions to systemic challenges.

For more information about the center, including ways to become an associate or affiliate member, go to www.uwyo.edu/sjrc/ or contact Rios at 307.766.4055 or frios@uwyo.edu.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Who We Are

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.

Learn More

**Wyoming School-
University Partnership**

**Wyoming National Board
Certification**

**National Network for
Educational Renewal**

**Goodlad
Institute**

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Coming up . . .

September 19-20

1st annual UW Literacy Conference
Laramie

September 19-21

NNER Annual Conference
Arlington, Texas

September 24

Governing Board meeting
Casper

September 29-30

Wyoming NCA School
Improvement Conference
Cheyenne

October 10 - 4 to 8 p.m.

Ellbogen Teaching & Learning
Symposium with Jonathan Kozol
*College of Education Auditorium,
University of Wyoming, Laramie*

October 19-20

2008 Fall Forum on Learning and
Assessment: High School to Higher
Education Transitions
University of Wyoming, Laramie

November 14

Governing Board meeting
Casper