A Call to Action

Dr. John I. Goodlad conducted two sessions during the two-day Annual Meeting of the National League of Democratic Schools (NLODS) held in Seattle in June 2012. The sessions focused on American schools past and present, some individuals who influenced education, and research studies and policies that have had great impact on schools over time. Dr. Goodlad is concerned about the direction of education in America and the lack of parent and community action related to what our public schools have become. Much of the content for the sessions was drawn from the Introduction and Papers No. 1 and No. 2 of the “Goodlad Occasional Papers: About Our Schools” that were written over the past year and a half (Paper No. 3 is now available).

“Parents and the larger community are misinformed regarding the work that schools do. They often believe that their schools are providing what they want for their children. According to research, parents want 50 percent of the school day focused on academics.” They want other important skills, abilities, and values included as part of the school day. In reality, this is not the case.

Goodlad went on to say, “In our current day, we recognize that many schools are unable to see beyond their fundamental charter of reading, writing, and arithmetic and identify the true philosophical purpose of education: to develop the unique human being . . . . We are developing people, not corporate employees.”

Continued on next page
“We’ve got to make the schools we have good. Federal policies like ‘No Child Left Behind’ have made it more difficult. The long-term effects of such policies have led us to an educational system that has lost track of its primary mission, to create informed, responsible, participating citizens.”

Goodlad complimented the attendees for the work they have done in their schools around the purpose of schools. He expressed that the time has come to be more explicit with parents and our school community members about what we are doing. “They need to know that, as educators, we know what we are doing. We must engage the community. They can become the support and advocates the school needs.”

“*The Goodlad Occasional Papers*: A Call to Action
Response by Dr. Gene Edgar

John Goodlad has a long history of prodding, cajoling, and even demanding us to think and to act. Once again John is at it, prodding those of us who care about public schooling in America to come together with others and take back the agenda of public schooling. John is impatient with the lack of action in our communities concerning the current direction of public schooling. He has developed a series of Occasional Papers cajoling us to organize, enlist others, form “Renaissance Cafés,” and take back the schooling agenda. He hopes educators, parents, and other community leaders will join together to put a stop to the “federalizing” of the school agenda, to push “the Market” out of controlling schools, and to return schools to their rightful owners: the communities in which they reside.

John would like you to read these papers, share them with friends, hold focus groups, use them in classes, organize a Renaissance Café: in short, to take action and become engaged. He is in the process of writing another occasional paper and plans to continue writing them indefinitely.

John would love to hear your thoughts and comments on these papers, so get to work! To interact with him, please email me your ideas, thoughts, comments, and questions at ebedgar@uw.edu.

Gene Edgar
Professor, University of Washington and Chair, Board of Directors, Institute for Educational Inquiry

**THE GOODLAD OCCASIONAL PAPERS: ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS**

- Introduction, December 2011
- Paper No. 1, February 2012
- Paper No. 2, April 2012

The Goodlad Occasional Papers can be found at:
A Tribute to Dr. Richard “Dick” Clark, Co-founder of NLODS

“Democracy isn’t an absence of control, nor is control antithetical to democracy. On the other hand, without democracy, control can be overwhelmingly destructive.”

— Dick Clark
NLODS Annual Meeting (June 2012)

Dr. Richard “Dick” Clark, 76, died on the morning of Friday, July 6, with his beloved wife, Rosemary, of 54 years and his two children, Melissa and Cameron, by his side. Dick was diagnosed with terminal cancer in January 2012. He lived his final six months with a verve that reflected the vitality of his entire life.

A Senior Associate of the Institute for Educational Inquiry and Co-founder of the NLODS, Dick received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington and later went on to teach in both secondary and post-secondary education at the University of Washington and Western Washington University. He also served as the Executive Director of the National Network for Educational Renewal from 2000 to fall 2003. Beginning in 2010, he contributed regularly to his blog “Community and Education” on the conditions of contemporary education.

These comments of colleagues have been heard or seen in writing over and over throughout the years:

“In countless ways, you (Dick) have been a wise and compassionate teacher to all of us.”

“Many have benefitted from your intelligence, wisdom, passion, and kindness.”

“The NLODS is grateful that you co-founded the League of Democratic Schools.”

“A short time after coming to Seattle, I became involved in a rather complex project conducted by the university and several large school districts. I knew I could find a range of specialists when needed, but finding the scholar with the wisdom needed would not be easy. It took me a couple of months before I realized that I was sitting in meetings with the person I needed, Dick Clark.”

— John I. Goodlad
Over two full days in August, a small group of four met in Seattle with John Goodlad, President of the Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI) and Co-Founder of the NLODS, to plan the next years of the League. The members of the group were the Eastern and Rocky Mountain/Plains States Regional Coordinators, Bernard Badiali and Jim Gaither; Donnan Stoicovy, a League school principal; and Dorothy Lloyd, Director of the NLODS. The four met as a group for four hours each afternoon with John Goodlad and IEI Secretary/Treasurer Paula McMannon.

Most important is that the intended purposes of the meeting, as well as the desired outcomes, were met: (1) to review and discuss who we (NLODS) are; benefits of League membership; accomplishments; successes; challenges; what should be continued, changed, or added, and (2) to hear John Goodlad’s thoughts about the League at this eight-year juncture and where we must focus for the next several years.

The afternoon meetings with John Goodlad were engaging, thought provoking, and confirming about our American schools today: the federal mandates, what parents and the community want from schools, the parents’ and larger community’s lack of awareness of what is happening in schools today, and what schools should and can be. Bernard, Donnan, Jim, and Dorothy left the afternoon meetings with John Goodlad both stimulated and reflective with respect to the League schools’ deepening and extending efforts that engage the larger school community around school renewal.

We are grateful for the opportunity the group had to go to Seattle and to have uninterrupted days and time to reaffirm the NLODS’ purpose and mission and determine plans for the next years. The League schools will be extending and heightening efforts to engage the parents and school community in understanding the purpose of schools in a democracy and what we are doing in our schools in reclaiming their purpose.

Thus the major 2012-2013 goal of the NLODS is the following:

**NLODS schools will strengthen and deepen educational renewal efforts that engage educators, students, parents, and the community around the public purpose of schools in our democracy.**

*Continued on next page*
NLODS Planning Meeting with John Goodlad

Continued from previous page

Conceptualizing the Foundations of League Activities

In our annual meeting in Seattle and in our regional conferences, it has been helpful and affirming to share practices within our schools that exemplify the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED). We place special emphasis on being able to “ground” those activities directly to the agenda. It is not enough to demonstrate and illustrate what goes on in our schools; we must be conscious of how those practices are illustrative of the agenda.

Democratic Practices for School Renewal

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NLODS Major Goal for 2012-2013

NLODS schools will strengthen and deepen educational renewal efforts that engage educators, students, parents, and the community around the public purpose of schools in our democracy.
Research on Schools Confirms NLODS Work

By Dorothy M. Lloyd
Director, NLODS
Dean Emeriti, California State University, Monterey Bay

In a recent CNN Opinion Article, “Get Past Strike, Fix Chicago Schools,” by Pedro Noguera, Professor at New York University, the following statement appears:

In an exhaustive study of many of the reforms carried out during the Duncan years, Tony Bryk and his colleagues at the University of Chicago found that the following elements are essential to sustained school reform: effective leadership, parent-community ties, professional capacity (teacher effectiveness) and a student-centered learning environment (http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/14/opinion/noguera-chicago-schools/index.html?hpt=hp_c1).

The essential “elements” for the schools we want and should have remain basically the same. Our work, as the National League of Democratic Schools (NLODS), aligns with and is confirmed by the findings of these studies and goes beyond. The NLODS is based on almost fifty years of research and inquiry around schools, much of it carried out by John Goodlad and his team of researchers while at the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Washington, and the Institute for Educational Inquiry in Seattle. The essential elements of schools listed above and additional critical elements are outlined in our NLODS brochure. They are clearly evident in current League schools and to an overwhelming degree in schools that have been members for several of the League’s eight years. League schools continually strive to model what schools are for and, in doing so, exhibit the following characteristics:

- Democratic Purpose—students gain knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes required for successful participation in our nation’s social and political democracy;
- Student Achievement—students are successful academically, socially, and personally;
- Ongoing Professional Development—members of the school community engage in continuous learning for excellence in teaching, school leadership, school renewal, and stewardship;
- Approaches to Learning—schools use a variety of approaches to learning and are learner-centered;
- Personalization—schools personalize the relationships among students, teachers, parents, and administrators by gathering as a group for dialogue and by other arrangements that facilitate communication among the members of the school community;
- School Culture and Practices—schools engage in reflective, democratic action in all aspects of the educational process and governance;
- Community Engagement—schools connect with parents and the larger community to inform and strengthen ties around education.

While many educators and education researchers use the word “reform,” we use a the word “renewal.” Renewal should be the focus of American schools. Critical to successful and ongoing school renewal are the essential “elements” listed in Pedro Noguera’s article—effective leadership, parent-community ties, professional capacity (teacher effectiveness), and a student-centered learning environment. In addition to these elements, others that are necessary include a positive school culture and practices as well as members of the school community (students, teachers, principal, and parents) continuously engaging in learning and dialogue for ongoing renewal of the school.
The two-day NLODS Annual Conference and Meeting was held on Friday and Saturday, June 1 and 2, in Seattle. The first day opened with the attendees being asked to share one word that describes a democratic school. The words were used to form the WORDLE above—a visual collective definition of democratic schools.

Following discussion and comments about the WORDLE, four principals shared briefly on the topic, “What We Are Doing in Our Schools” (Margaret Hudson, University of Wyoming Lab School, Laramie; Robyn Davis, Pasadena Park Elementary School, Spokane; Joe Greenberg, Lehman Alternative Community School, Ithaca; Jim Gaither, Woods Learning Center, Casper). This was followed by small groups meeting together to share successful practices implemented in their school that foster a democratic school culture and/or democratic character. Donnan Stoicovy, principal of Park Forest Elementary School in State College, Pennsylvania, facilitated.

The first afternoon sessions on Day 1 focused on Community Engagement, the League schools’ major goal for 2011-2012: Develop ongoing, sustainable mechanisms for deepening our community’s understanding and engagement around the public purpose of schools in our democracy. A number of activities and events related to this goal of building stronger ties between the community members and the school were discussed. This session was followed by a two-hour session with Dr. John I. Goodlad, President of the Institute for Educational Inquiry and Co-Founder of the NLODS. The Goodlad Occasional Papers No. 1 and No. 2 were the topic.

Day 2 included six schools showing 5- to 8-minute video clips of their school and learning experiences that foster and support desired skills and attitudes. In addition, blocks of time were spent on “Where we are, what we need, upping the level of our means of communication, and steps to ensure the League’s sustainability. The day ended with John Goodlad talking a bit about continuing the work and his thoughts on action needed: greater engagement of parents in the community.

Many attendees expressed that this year’s Annual Conference and Meeting was the best ever. The following statements were on the Evaluation Form, and on a scale of 1-5, each session received a rating of between 4.6 and 4.9:

- Learned from others what practices are proving successful related to essential characteristics of democratic schools.
- Extended and deepened learning about sustaining a democratic school culture that fosters democratic character.
- Gained more understanding and means of engaging the community around the purpose of public schools.

“How do we get the goals of schooling and the agency of schooling back from Washington?”

—Dr. John Goodlad
2012 NLODS Annual Conference and Meeting
School
Highlights

University of Wyoming Lab School (Laramie, WY)
- Our school hosted the NLODS Rocky Mountain Region’s Annual Meeting in partnership with the Shepard Symposium for Social Justice at the University of Wyoming. Students, pre-service teachers, and faculty were both attendees and presenters at the symposium. League teachers and students served as panelists for a well-attended lunch presentation.
- Our middle school students took a prominent leadership role during the Regional Meeting, hosting a youth Socratic discussion and a community forum on the Purpose of Schooling. Participants included: Wyoming School-University Partnership members, NLODS regional coordinators, school superintendents, school principals, parents, pre-service teachers, legislators, students, and teachers. The high level of student leadership was recognized by the editors of Rethinking Schools magazine, and earned them acceptance and scholarship to present at the annual NNER conference in Denver in October 2012.
- Students are expected to use many skills—show and speak up, make a contribution, and know your rights and responsibilities—in their daily interactions with others and in class.

Pasadena Park Elementary
(Spokane Valley, WA)

We have an event each year titled, “How Can I Be the Difference Where I Live, Work, and Play.” For our students to be prepared, functioning citizens in every way when they graduate from high school, experiences around student voice, citizenship, and volunteer work/community service are provided through the year. The outcomes and learning from these experiences are shared at the event. Governor Christine Gregoire attended and spoke.

The Delta Program (State College, PA)

This year Delta students have already been engaged in several community-building events. They helped organize and run a blood drive for the Red Cross when approached for help. This almost impromptu event raised over twenty-five pints of blood that will benefit local residents in our State College neighborhoods. Students also held several engaging discussions at Mount Nittany School to describe what it is like being a part of a democratic school for student teachers working there from Penn State.

Guernsey-Sunrise High School
(Guernsey, WY)

In an effort to provide more individualized education for students, the staff at Guernsey-Sunrise is studying customized learning and how to provide for the individual learning needs of each student. Pilot programs are in place to work out the issues that come with such a change. Student input is being sought through individual conversations as well as group input on district strategic planning. An intervention period is also used at times to solicit student voice on a variety of subjects and issues. In addition, students will be involved in helping create the strategic plan for the district by serving on the steering committee this past summer and in the future.

Park Forest Elementary (State College, PA)

- The school continues to work to engage and deepen our community’s understanding and engagement in the public purpose of schools in our democracy. To that end, two community forum evenings were held to engage parents and community members about the purpose of public school.
- We established partnerships within our community so that we could be engaged in meaningful service learning. Our partnership included multiple community organizations: State College Food Bank/Pet Food Bank; Centre House (homeless shelter); Youth Haven (runaway youth shelter); and Centre County Waste Authority. We had Service Learning successes. Listening to our students share what they learned confirmed our beliefs that service learning is a great teaching and learning tool as well as a wonderful way to engage the community.
Woods Learning Center (Casper, WY)

- Each student in the school has at least one opportunity to do an independent research project on a topic she or he chooses and a presentation to the community. The school has developed a sequence of expectations for these projects to ensure growth and age appropriateness. Students begin with a the topic of themselves and their families in their first two years and end with a world-issues topic in their last two years. All other academic activities in the school should fit these goals as well.

- At the “Have a Heart Day” event, in which students learn about their communities and provide various community-based services, Woods’ students were asked to lead groups of third-graders through the Casper College Agricultural Expo and to introduce speakers at the Step Up for Kids Day.

- Participated in Natrona County School District’s first, system-wide accreditation, the results of which solidified the school’s vision and philosophy as it enters its twentieth year in existence. It also reinforced its commitment to being a “democratic school” by fully engaging students, parents, and faculty in the education system.

- A highlight again this year was “Community Day.” Students have an opportunity to share their learning with the local community. The title for the event is “Woods Has a Heart.” Student-led projects that focused on service in the community were shared. This year the students assisted food banks, served meals at the Salvation Army, sorted donated clothing at one of the shelters, and helped out at the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Lehman Alternative Community School Grades 6-12 (Ithaca, NY)

- We are proud our democratic school inspires our students to do two-year teacher prep programs using the teacher assistant program within our school. The applicants we are getting for teaching positions at the school are full of former Lehman students. We hired two teachers last year that were graduates of our school. It’s a perfect way to maintain our legacy although we also like to bring fresh energy and perspective to, “challenge courageously and respectfully,” our mission and values.

- The school continues to expand our impressive service based, service-learning model that encourages more community engagement. We continue to promote an “empty school” policy because it means our kids are actively participating democratically and engaged in their community.

- This past year we took 14 students out to New Orleans for a week of helping victims of Katrina rebuild their homes (www.vimeo.com/44585265), and have done similar work in our own neighborhoods with people who have been displaced because of major flooding experienced last fall.

- We expanded our definition and understanding of cultural and social competency. A committee of students formed a “Students for Social Responsibility Committee” that had as its primary focus raising awareness around disability with relation to mobility issues. Students wrote personal narratives with a professor from Ithaca College, that were turned into an original play, and performed a local theatre company.
Spring 2012 Rocky Mountain Regional Conference

The University of Wyoming Lab School, an NLODS member school, hosted the spring 2012 Rocky Mountain Regional Conference. Margaret Hudson, principal of the Lab School, and the Lab School students did an outstanding job planning and organizing the conference. Especially impressive was how much students helped to organize and participated in the conference. It set a high standard for “democratic schools.”

The “Shepard Symposium on Social Justice,” which ran concurrently, was a great framework and support for the regional conference. These sessions were very relevant to our work. A panel presentation and discussion on the first day gave participants an overview of the purposes of the National League of Democratic Schools. The panelists were three of the regional coordinators, Robyn Davis, Guy Sallade and Jim Gaither; two teachers from the Lab School, Stella and Joanie; and two Lab School students. Attendees asked great questions.

Visits to area schools, including the UW Lab School, were part of the two-day conference. Conference attendees were impressed and learned from what they saw and observed during the visits.

The fact that several middle school students chose to work on the conference as an elective course was amazing. They were articulate, very proud of their school, and knowledgeable about their own education. In addition, they organized their own student discussion group with questions to start an impressive and amazing conversation with other students who attended from Woods Learning Center, a League school in Casper, Wyoming.

Also of note were the Small-Group Table Discussions on “Why We Do What We Do,” facilitated by Audrey Kleinsasser, Director of the Wyoming School-University Partnership. Participants included staff members from Woods and the UW Lab School, school students, parents, university faculty and students, student teachers, a district superintendent, and a state senator. There were many powerful and inspiring conversations that got to the basis of why we do what we do.

Robyn Davis, Coordinator of the NLODS Western Region, was truly excited for the opportunity to attend the conference. And, in turn, she provided great perspective from her region, district, and school.
Announcements

Dianne Suiter, long-time Principal of Central Academy, announced her retirement at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year. She will be missed not only by the school and community but also by folks in the League of Democratic Schools.

Her mentor, inspiration, and friend, Deborah Meier, has been the perfect role model for Dianne. Few people know that Dianne actually studied with Deborah and wrote her doctoral thesis on Dr. Meier’s activities as a school leader in New York.

Dianne has been a stalwart advocate of democratic schooling and a devoted member of the League. We expect that She will remain active in some aspect of democratic education in the years to come. We wish Dianne a very fulfilling retirement.

NLODS Members Volunteer for Special Roles

- Common Day of Service, Study or Book – Robyn Davis and Jim Gaither
- Youth Forum – Robyn Davis and Jim Gaither
- Membership – Jon Downs
- Advocacy and Like-minded Groups – Joe Greenberg and Donnan Stoicovy
- Archiving/Documenting – Vale Hartley and Dianne Bath
- Long-Range Planning – Regional Coordinators and Donnan Stoicovy

Jamal Fields, Principal of Junction Avenue K-8 School in Livermore, California, was selected from among 1,000 plus applicants for a full scholarship to the Harvard Education Leadership Ed.D. Program. Jamal and his family moved to Cambridge in August to begin his studies. Congratulations, Jamal!

Gail Romig, Teacher at Park Forest Elementary School in State College, Pennsylvania, received an Excellence in Teaching Mathematics Award at the White House.

Gail was honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., and had a week-long experience with other U.S. educators who received the award. The highlight was going to the White House to meet President Obama. Congratulations, Gail!

Voice

- Voice is equal to other academic priorities
- Voice can lead to changes
- Voice leads to conflict resolution
- Voice leads to extending the heart of citizenship
- Voice leads to conflict resolution
- Voice leads to extending the heart of citizenship
- Voice leads to questioning why you do what you do
- Voice leads to responsibility for leadership

A Thunderous Applause!

for

Donnan Stoicovy
Principal, Park Forest Elementary School
State College, Pennsylvania

for her Superb group facilitation skills so clearly evident in the three major sessions at the NLODS Annual Conference and Meeting in June 2012.

NLODS on Facebook!

Now you can keep up to date on what your fellow League members are doing and share your own successes on the NLODS Facebook page. Submit a request to join the group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/208831319127840/
Institute for Educational Inquiry
117 East Louisa Street #371
Seattle, WA 98102

Phone: 206-325-3010
Email: paulam@ieiseattle.org

Do you know of a school that should be a member of the League? Send the name of the school and the principal's name, email address, and phone number to the appropriate regional coordinator:

♦ Dorothy Lloyd, NLODS Director
dlloyd@csumb.edu
♦ Robyn Davis, Western Region Coordinator
robyn.davis@wvsd.org
♦ Jim Gaither, Rocky Mountain/Plains States Region Co-Coordinator
jim_gaither@natronaschools.org
♦ Guy Sallade, Rocky Mountain/Plains States Region Co-Coordinator
guy_sallade@natronaschools.org
♦ Bernard Badiali, Eastern Region Coordinator
bxb8@psu.edu

Agenda for Education in a Democracy

Common Characteristics of NLODS Schools

- **Democratic Purpose:** NLODS schools believe the primary purpose of schooling is to develop in young people the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for successful participation in our nation's social and political democracy.
- **Student Achievement:** Students in such schools are successful academically, socially, and personally.
- **Ongoing Professional Development:** All members of the school community engage in continuous learning.
- **Approaches to Learning:** These are schools that use a variety of approaches to learning, including engaging students with parents and other adults within the community.
- **Personalization:** These schools deliberately personalize the relationships among students, teachers, parents, and administrators by faculty members' gathering as a group for dialogue and by making other arrangements to facilitate communications among the members of the school and the school community.
- **Community Engagement:** These schools connect and engage the parents, as well as the larger community, around education for democracy.

"Schools are the only institutions in our nation specifically charged with the two-part mission of enculturating the young in a social and political democracy and introducing them to the organized bodies of knowledge that discipline and enrich our lives as citizens, workers, parents, and individual human beings."

—John I. Goodlad
*What Schools Are For*, 2006 (orig. pub. 1979), p. xix

See past NLODS Newsletters at:
[www.ieiseattle.org/LODSnewsletters.htm](http://www.ieiseattle.org/LODSnewsletters.htm)