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APTD CONNECTIONS

Newsletter of the Ackerley
Partnership for Teacher
Development: The APTD Network

Special Interest Articles:

New Teacher Center
Conference attended by
S&T Mentors!

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Thoughts from the National Symposium on Teacher Induction

Mentors need to be politically literate teacher-leaders for early-career teachers. What does this mean? We need to know how to read the system, navigate through it, and ultimately, transform it. Because today's mentees will become the leaders of tomorrow ("seeds we sow"), we have to support them in navigating the school, understanding classroom and organizational systems, realizing the importance of long-term (and short-term) planning and pacing, and appreciating the value of parent communication. No small task(s) - for mentors or mentees!

In educational consultant Jennifer Abrams' session, she provided invaluable "etiquette" tips to grow school savvy teachers: e-mail (try to return within 48 hours, less is more); meetings

(be on time, avoid defensive reactions); working with office staff (do not treat them as assistants or with condescending tones); dress (read the student dress code; don't break it).

Though neither mid- nor early-career teachers may wish to take on new roles, we can always engage in acts of leadership. These might be asking a thoughtful question in a staff meeting, bringing a fresh perspective to a conversation, sharing ideas and practices with others. This is real transformation!

(with thanks to the New Teacher Center, Ronni Mann & Suzanne Riley, Jennifer Abrams, Margaret Wheatley, the Survive & Thrive Project, and Sally Luttrell-Montes)

- Julie Lehnis, Madison Middle School
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"Being School Savvy: What Does a New Teacher Need to Know?"

The session by Jennifer Abrams, Educational Consultant, during the New Teacher Center Symposium applies to every person in the teaching field. As our new teachers and staff members begin their careers in our buildings, there are many smaller details within the working environment we neglect as they integrate into the school setting. Jennifer Abrams' session focused on school savvy etiquette.

As a new member of our teaching community arrives, we often orient them on the big picture details of teaching: curriculum, teaming, supplies and key resource people within the building and district. We often forget the smaller details regarding the professional etiquette in the school. The session reminded us to talk with staff members about email form and respectful email response within the building, district and community. The simple yet important reminders were to beware of the "reply all" feature and be time sensitive. Keep your emails short and to the point.

Working well with staff members is an important element throughout our entire professional career. As new teachers join the building, the

first people they need to connect with are the office staff. The office staff is a tremendous resource and learning how to work efficiently with them should be a part of new teacher orientation. Collaboration with staff, team and department members can also be difficult when disagreements arise. Mentoring early career teachers on conflict resolution and sensitive communication will help them strengthen their collaboration with staff members. The simple statement of "go to the source when conflicts arise" sounds so simple but is often forgotten during a disagreement.

The final element of being school savvy is attire. If the building requires a teacher dress code, talk with new staff members about the details of this code. Encourage them to take a visual poll of their colleagues and find their own middle ground when choosing attire for the professional setting. The most important feature of dressing for teaching is to know the student dress code and not to break it!

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Mentoring the New Special Education Teacher!

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I have been a Special Education Teacher in the Renton, WA area for over 15 years. I have seen many new special education teachers come and go in that time period. When I became the Department Chairperson 8 years ago, I had begun putting vast amounts of time and energy into training, supporting, and energizing my teachers in their profession, but still they would come for a short time and move on to other areas or into general education. Something different had to be tried in order to encourage and sustain teachers in this area.

When given the opportunity to attend the Eighth National Symposium on Teacher Induction, my first objective was to attend all sessions relating to mentoring of Special Education Teachers. I gained valuable information from all of them, but wanted to specifically mention some valid points from the session called, Mentoring the New Special Education Teacher, presented by Marilyn Torp.

Mentoring the new teacher on classroom management, curriculum, and school climate is a huge area alone, but adding in the IEP process, IDEA compliance, behavior plans, state/federal regulations, etc., the amount of additional guidance needed becomes very specific and complicated. Understanding the complex workload and stressful conditions of the special education new teacher becomes the vocal point. The new teachers come from colleges and student teaching assignments where the special education component was insulated by the training program or the

college. When given a room of their own with all the ramifications of compliance and the law, the new teacher is overwhelmed and the stress and anxiety sets in.

In the presentation by Marilyn Torp, she states that the reasons early career special education teachers leave the profession are lack of enough support, inadequate resources for the job, magnitude of caseload, scheduling, and behavior management of students. Even with my experience and longevity in the special education field, occasionally I have been at a loss on how to give the new teacher the best answer for the desired results. What works for me, may not always work for a person with a different style of teaching or even organizational skills. Making sure the new career teacher knows you are listening to their concerns and are supportive of their ideas can be the best and most rewarding way to insure that teachers stay in special education. Oftentimes their basic need from a mentor is just having the opportunity to "vent" their frustrations and the quick answer to a special education question. My personal goal when working with new special education teachers is to give the quick and legal way to handle the vast amount of paperwork. It will never be disputed that the special education paperwork and documentation can almost drown even the most highly organized teacher. However, with proper training and mentoring, the job of a special education teacher can be the most rewarding and enlightening.

Janet Schultz, Nelsen MS

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Interns at Bailey Gatzert are participating beyond the classroom in many ways!

- Staff meetings
- Kindergarten Fair
- NUA
- Bus and playground duty
- Zipping up jackets on a cold day
- Chasing a student who left the building!
- Beautifying Bailey Gatzert walls with samples of student work aligned with GLE's
- A delightful disposition that truly communicates a belief that our students will succeed

- Kerry Richter, kjrichter@seattleschools.org

Wing Luke Celebrates Diversity

"To celebrate the diversity of our school's population and to prepare our parents to assist their children with their math homework, Wing Luke is hosting several ethnic family nights. Interpreters will be present as family members and school staff visit with each other. Classroom teachers and math coaches will explain Wing Luke's math instruction and what they, as

family members, can do to practice these math skills at home. Scheduled are evening get-togethers for English, Native American, Vietnamese, Mien, Hmong, Lao, and Cambodian speakers in January and get-togethers for Latino, Filipino, Chinese, Somali, and Tigrigna speakers in February."

Cathy Van Winkle
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Achieving a Family Friendly Nathan Hale

Recently a group of ten parents and staff from Nathan Hale completed a two day workshop put on by the Washington Alliance for Better Schools regarding how to increase school, family and community partnerships. Research shows that school programs that emphasize family involvement and relate well to their community have students who outperform those in schools lacking these qualities. Not only do students flourish, but schools are also strengthened when families take an active interest in their children's education.

As an important self-assessment step in the process, we randomly surveyed members of the Hale Community to gather input on the current state of family engagement at Nathan Hale. The group has used the data that these surveys produced as a springboard for planning future activities. A pamphlet was produced by this

group illustrating ways that the Nathan Hale community can become more involved in the school. The group was present at the Bite of Hale on December 15th providing free drinks and information to all who were present at the event. The group is currently looking at future events - both existing and new - at which the greater Nathan Hale Community can be brought into the school. Also on the agenda for the future will be training for the Nathan Hale Community and the Nathan Hale staff to promote better mechanisms for communication within our whole community.

We look forward to getting input from our whole community in order to make Nathan Hale a better school for all our students

-Tim Ames tsames@seattleschools.org

Poetry at McClure

Sixth graders at McClure Middle School are delving into poetry with a poet/performance artist through a partnership with Writers in the Schools. The program, sponsored by Seattle Arts and Lectures, pairs poet Sierra Nelson with three Language Arts classrooms. Ms. Nelson teaches poetry every Thursday as McClure's "writer in residence." Students explore similes, metaphors, and imagery in several poetic forms. Recently, they crafted wilderness poems, which were featured in a display at Benaroya Hall during a presentation by a National Geographic photographer. Five students' poems were selected for a display at the John Stanford Center, headquarters for Seattle Public Schools. Those students will join other Seattle student writers at a reception on Feb. 13 to celebrate their work. In May, McClure poets will have a chance to compete in a 6th grade poetry slam.

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Teachers Learning in Networked Communities (TLINC)

APTD Network Mission

To create and support the collaboration of P-12 & university educators to improve teaching & learning in public schools & universities in ways that respond to the needs of (pupils, students) who face the greatest challenges.

T-LINC is a forum designed to establish online learning communities to support the professional development of new teachers. A key component of the project is close collaboration between the UW's Teacher Education Program, the school districts we serve including the Network Partner Schools, and respective educational associations. The T-LINC collaboration connects new teachers with peers, experienced colleagues, and higher education faculty to ensure that new teachers are successful. T-LINC is informed by research on teacher learning, communities of practice, and online learning to create a learner-centered, flexible, and interactive approach to meeting the needs of new teachers.

The T-LINC project's goals are to:

- *improve teacher retention, especially early career teachers;*
- *accelerate proficiency for new teachers;*
- *provide opportunities for all teachers to be contributors to a learning community that continues to evolve; and*
- *establish partnership capacity-building structures and processes that assure sustainability.*

We are at the beginning stages of piloting different elements of TLINC and started first with the Seattle Public Schools with an intent to scale out to all of our Partner School Districts by next fall. Our first component is a set of **On Demand**

Resources. This rich set of resources fall into four areas: 1) Curriculum Resources, 2) Instructional Resources, 3) Employment and Professional Development, and 4) Parents, Family and School Community. You can access these resources by going to the following website:

<<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/star/tlinc>>.

We are currently creating opportunities for teachers to work together with educators and faculty online in professional learning communities using a platform called "**Tapped In**". Tapped In was designed for teachers and has been in existence for a number of years. We will be conducting Study Groups online as well as exploring ways to integrate Video Traces. Watch for more information coming soon about this component!

TLINC is supported by the Ackerley Foundation, Teachers for a New Era, and Microsoft. Through our Microsoft funds, we are part of a national project with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and similar district/university partnerships in Denver and Memphis.

As part of the Network, all of you will have the chance to take advantage of TLINC and help shape the forum so it can positively impact teaching and learning.

Questions? Contact either Sally Luttrell-Montes (sallylm@u.washington.edu) or Kurt Sahl (sahlk@u.washington.edu).

The Road to True Partnership

The Symposium on Teacher Induction in February left me with a mixture of emotions. Hearing the exciting work taking place in districts around the country to support teachers, to develop partnerships between nonprofits, universities, and local school districts, and to better meet the needs of struggling students inspired me with new possibilities for my own school and my own teaching practices. After the final session of the conference, my mind raced with ideas to share with my colleagues and building administrators.

After an hour of frantically writing these ideas down while sitting on a park bench in the sun outside of the conference center, my enthusiasm slowly gave way to despair. After reviewing my notes—all of the ideas, programs, possibilities—one common thread emerged. Small changes are not enough, and all constituent groups (district administrators, building administrators, building teachers, university partners) need to aim their resources and efforts in the same direction. Without this combined effort, reform will continue to move at glacier pace and have minimal impact. And individual teachers will spend countless well-intentioned hours working on improvement plans that either are not implemented or are not sustained.

Successful induction programs around the country require major changes to the way schools support

their early career teachers and the ways in which they staff their buildings. Likewise, successful programs to decrease the achievement gap require changes in teaching strategies school wide and the creation of intervention programs for students who continue to struggle. Thomas Guskey talked about the five levels of planning and implementation necessary for creating effective professional development. He emphasized the importance of sustained, sequential planning and evaluation.

In short, I left the San Jose Teacher Induction conference with an even stronger appreciation for the power of the Ackerley partnership program to guide school reform. But at the same time, an overwhelming belief that we cannot be partners in name only. Teachers and building administrators must be partners. Buildings and districts must be partners. Districts and the university must be partners. The exciting programs and possibilities shared during this conference cannot take place here until we move beyond being partners in name only and become partners in reality. And this partnership requires a willingness from all sides to change in fundamental ways how we do things. Here is to hoping we have taken the first step toward true partnership.

-Jef Rettmann (jef.rettmann@renton.wednet.edu)

Highlights of New Teacher Center Induction Conference

I had the exciting opportunity to attend the *New Teacher Center Induction Conference* from February 5th – February 7th in San Jose, CA. Here are highlights from a few of the sessions I attended.

Mentors as Teacher Leaders: How Mentors can become Intentionally Political

Presenters Ronni Mann and Suzanne of UC Santa Cruz led a dynamic session which focused on the power that teachers have to effect change in the system.

Most interesting quote: “Political literacy is your ability to read the system, navigate through it, and ultimately transform it.”

Using a Mentoring Model to Support the Retention of Excellent Teachers in Hard to Teach Settings

Kitty Dixon and Miakje Kamstra of UC Santa Cruz presented a mentoring model that includes site-base mentors, as well as coaching of all district personnel, in order to build a system that is optimal for teaching and learning.

Most interesting quote: “In hard to teach settings teachers receiving traditional mentoring support still move on to more desirable teaching settings usually after their first or second year.”

Being School Savvy: What does a New Teacher Need to Know?

Jennifer Abrams, educational consultant to schools

across the nation, including Stanford University, laid out practical guidelines in the form of guiding questions to help new teachers in the following areas: Participation in School Community; Developing as a Professional Educator; School Savvy Etiquette.

In addition, she discussed the importance of teachers knowing how to manage impulsivity and passivity.

Most interesting quote: “One of the most important skills one can cultivate is the ability to separate action from reaction. Thinking before you speak and then speaking up when you feel it is truly important is by far the first few steps to becoming school and systems savvy.”

Other sessions I attended include:

- College and School District Partnerships: Mentors as Adjunct Faculty to Bridge Theory and Practice***
- Findings from New Teacher Center Research on Induction***

After an intense and inspiring three days, I returned to my classroom renewed and even more excited to be a member of the teaching profession. Please feel free to send me an e-mail if you have questions or would like additional information about these sessions. sheila.ward@wednet.edu

-Sheila Ward, Bryn Mawr Elementary

New Teacher Center Induction Conference, Feb 5th - Feb 7th, San Jose, CA



Survive and Thrive Inquiry Project - What is the Latest? -

-Sally Luttrell-Montes

As many of you know, the Network has been funding experienced teachers and early career teachers in our Partner Schools to explore together the kinds of support systems that do and do not exist in a building to help the latter individuals survive and thrive in the classroom and school. This article provides an update of what the mentor/early career teacher teams have discovered so far, what the mentors have been doing to build their capacity, and what we are doing next to strengthen advocacy for novices.

Progress To Date

Throughout the fall, the S&T teams came up with about 2 questions a month to consider and kept a journal to record their reflections. Mentors were encouraged to touch base with their early career teacher(s) informally as often as possible but the teams met every other week formally to discuss their responses to the questions. In some of the schools where there are multiple teams, all of the mentors and early career teachers met together some of the time. At Eckstein, they even included the preservice teachers in these meetings.

Here are some of the questions that the mentors/early career teachers found helpful to their work:

- *What could administration/the school have told you in your first year that would have helped you?*
- *What are some hints in building relationships with parents?*
- *How does a successful teacher promote a critical and yet positive learning environment?*
- *How can structure help engage more students?*

S&T Mentors meet once a quarter to gain new insights, share challenges, and identify possible solutions to these challenges. In the fall, we read an article called *Induction into Learning Communities* which can be found at the following website: www.nctaf.org. This article highlights current best practices for supporting early career teachers – especially at the building level. Before the February meeting, early career teachers and mentors filled out a survey to indicate progress and issues so in part, the meeting was based on the feedback received. In addition, a number of S&T mentors attended the New Teacher Center Conference in San Jose, CA., and each participant shared something that they learned with the larger group.

The mentors who attended this recent Induction Conference came back with a stronger sense of the need and power of advocating for early career teachers – questioning policies and practices in both their buildings and their districts.

You will find articles throughout the Newsletter that give you a sense of some of the ideas they brought back. These articles cover things like:

1. ways teachers new to the building can be acculturated into the school,
2. tips for dealing with special education issues as a mentor or novice teacher
3. culturally responsive teaching
4. online supports

Next Steps

Now that the S&T teams have collected evidence on the kinds of things that early career teachers need, want, and find effective, it is time to move forward more deliberately. Over the next few weeks, the teams will discuss what school staff/structures encourage early career teachers to survive and thrive in the building then brainstorm missing elements or components that need to be improved. Following this, the teams will come up with a list of priority issues and brainstorm some initial ideas to address the challenges or ways to strengthen current practices. The teams will then take their initial ideas to the staff to gather additional thoughts and finally create a Recommendation Report.

Great Resources to Grow Professionally

Survive and Thrive is all about improving teaching and learning. Building our capacity as educators is a life-long effort. For some great resources to help you in your teaching and learning, I highly recommend that you visit the following the UW K-12 Resource Guide website to see what kind of curricular resources, professional development opportunities, student programs, speakers, and field trip possibilities are available through the university: <http://www.outreach.washington.edu/k12guide/>. Once you get to this site, you can sort by type of program, content area, or grade level.

You can also find online and in-person courses designed especially for K-12 educators at the following website: <http://www.outreach.washington.edu/k12/>. Some of these are supported by grants and are at no cost to you.

In addition, the UW is offering a 3-credit course that has been designed for teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience who are ready to take on teacher leadership roles. This course is a precursor for a new Master in Instructional Leadership program that will begin in the summer of 2007. The course runs from 6/26 – 7/7 in the mornings. The Network is offering 25 full scholarships to teachers who qualify from our Partner Schools as well as teacher leaders in the Network districts. We have been trying to distribute fliers through the Network Liaisons and at meetings but if you would like a copy of the information and let us know of your interest, please email Sally at sallylm@u.washington.edu.

We're on the Web!

See us at:
<http://depts.washington.edu/wactl/ackearly/index.html>

Please contact Marisa Bier at mlbier@u.washington.edu with comments, questions, and suggestions for newsletter!