

LODS Newsletter

Regional Coordinators

Western Region—Antony Smith

Antony Smith grew up in the Puget Sound area, experiencing both traditional and alternative educational programs, including an open-concept elementary school and a small, non-graded democratic junior high school. He is a graduate of Bellevue High School, the University of Oregon, and the University of Washington.

For ten years, Tony worked as a special education assistant, as a transitional bilingual assistant at the high school level, and as a classroom teacher in an ethnically diverse multi-age elementary school. He enjoyed interacting with small groups of students across two grade levels and loved watching students' talents shine in various subject areas, from art to math, from physical education to reading.

In 2000, Tony participated in a leadership program with the Institute for Educational Inquiry and used this new knowledge to help his school work through a refocusing process during a time of great change. He decided to pursue a doctorate in education at the University of Washington and wrote his dissertation on the topic of instructional coaching for middle school language arts teachers. Other research areas include teacher-student writing conferences, reading fluency assessment and instruction, and teacher education. He is now in his second year as Assistant Professor at the University of Washington Bothell.



Rocky Mountain/Plains States Region—Judy MacDonald



Judy MacDonald retired in June 2007 after serving as a district administrator in Poudre School District, Fort Collins, Colorado, where she was in charge of library media, instructional technology and staff development for twenty-two years. Prior to that, Judy taught English and Speech at the secondary level in Iowa, Vermont, Georgia, and Colorado. She received a master's degree in instruction and a Ph.D. in administra-

League of Democratic
Schools (LODS) Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 1
November 30, 2007

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ANNOUNCEMENT LSDS/LODS NAME CHANGE

John I. Goodlad initiated the League of Small Democratic Schools (LSDS) in 2004 to promote professional development that emphasizes the growth of students as individuals who are successful members of a democratic society and to help preserve schools that successfully advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. As of August 2007, the name has been changed to the League of Democratic Schools (LODS).

If you have items to submit for future newsletters, please email them to Dorothy Lloyd at dorothy@ieiseattle.org

New LODS Schools

PLEASANT GROVE SCHOOL

Principal: Rebecca Gillespie

Pleasant Grove School has an enrollment of under 200 K-8 students and is the only school in the Pleasant Grove Joint Union School District located north of Sacramento, California. The school began serving the students of the rural farming communities of South Sutter County in the late 1800s, and many of our students' parents and grandparents, and even some of our current staff members, attended school here. We enjoy the many benefits of being a central part of this close-knit, multigenerational farming community. Although we have strong roots in the past, we are a forward-thinking, high-quality school. The students and staff all work hard and expect a lot of each other. We provide a unique educational experience, and everyone performs their best, no matter what their role.

Our vision is one of excellence in action and continuous learning—for all of us! We are not a complacent community of learners: everyone from our board of trustees to our bus drivers and cafeteria staff and custodians help support our vision. As a learning community, we believe that "failure is not an option" and support our beliefs by putting practices into place that support that belief. We insist that homework assigned to reinforce and extend learning time is completed and done in a quality manner.

Our student body has for many years been comprised of about 50 percent inter-district transfer students who come to us by choice due to our reputation for achievement and expectations. We, however, do not discriminate about the kind of students we accept for enrollment: we routinely accept students with behavioral problems or special education needs or who receive Title I services. In fact, we receive a great number of inter-district attendance requests for students in 6 through 8 grades who have been unsuccessful in other school environments. Our greatest reward is seeing these students make a turnaround and start to flourish!

We value strong, fundamental, standards-based education while employing innovative, engaging teaching techniques to meet the variety of learning needs and styles we encounter. Pleasant Grove is becoming one of the original Challenge Districts in California. Teachers meet each week to collaborate on assessment outcomes, curriculum, instructional practices, technology, or behavioral expectations or to share about a professional book or article. Ongoing professional dialogue and training keeps us up to date and consistent in our endeavors.



FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Principal: Rob Williams

Fairview Elementary School is a year-round elementary school with an enrollment of 980 students. It is located in South Modesto, California. The school offers students the benefits of an enthusiastic staff dedicated to providing a strong academic program with emphasis on reading, writing, and mathematics and integration of these skills in science, social science, and fine arts.

Fairview is one of only eleven schools across the nation (and only three elementary schools) to have won the designation "First Amendment School" by the First Amendment Center in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/>), for promoting civic awareness and responsibility.

The school aims to maintain high academic expectations and instill in students civic literacy and habits; establish a safe and orderly learning environment; provide a positive recognition of students, staff, and parents; and provide an integrated staff development and education program consistent with the state curriculum frameworks and California Blueprint standards.

Its demographics include a mix of a lower and middle socioeconomic population; 86 percent of the students are from families that are on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The student population is approximately 85 percent Hispanic, 7 percent Anglo, 3.5 percent Black, and 4.5 percent other.



EL VISTA ELEMENATARY SCHOOL

Principal: Marlyn Rockey

El Vista Elementary School participates in the Success for All Reading Program. It is the aim of El Vista School to encourage and assist every student to develop respect for others, the ability to use independent learning skills, positive self-



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esteem, good communication skills, mastery of basic skills, and the ability to use higher-order thinking skills. Over four hundred students attend this K-6 elementary school with 73 percent of students on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Forty-four percent of students are Latino and 37 percent are white.



FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Principal: Jamal Fields

Franklin Elementary School is located in Modesto, California. It has an enrollment of over 800 students and houses a number of federally funded programs that include: School Improvement Program, Economic Impact Aid-Bilingual, Special Education, Family School Parent Participation project, and Latchkey. The school aims to encourage and assist every student to:

1. Attain a positive self-image and strive for the highest goals of which each is capable;
2. Become a responsible, contributing member of the community;
3. Attain knowledge and skills to become an economically productive worker;
4. Be physically fit and value participation in fitness and sports activities; and
5. Become adept in developing positive relationships with staff members, family, and friends.

The Franklin student population is composed of a wide mixture of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

THE BULLOCH COUNTY PERFORMANCE LEARNING CENTER

Principal: Daniel Edenfield

The Bulloch County Performance Learning Center (BCPLC) is a small, nontraditional school designed for students who are not reaching their educational potential in their present school environment. The BCPLC serves students in grades 9 through 12. The school houses five regular education classrooms: one for each of the four core subject areas, and one for business and electives. Under the direction of subject-area facilitators—teachers in the traditional classroom—BCPLC students enjoy a one-to-fifteen student-facilitator ratio while working in an “old school” environment that promotes workplace ethics such as punctuality, proper dress, team achievement, and community involvement.

Staff and community stakeholders have developed a vision and a mission statement (the mission of the BCPLC is to provide an asset-enriched environment that prepares students for college, career, and life), and a formal statement of beliefs:

1. All students can learn;
2. Learning is a life-long goal;
3. A safe, caring, and attractive environment encourages successful learning;
4. Every student can make a positive contribution;
5. Every student has value and can develop marketable skills; and
6. All stakeholders have a responsibility for advancing the school's mission.



Working in partnership with Communities in Schools (CIS) of Georgia, the BCPLC uses a flexible and innovative approach to meet the needs of Bulloch County students. An assumption of the faculty and staff is that the student-centered curriculum is the strength of the program. Students are able to navigate the self-paced curriculum at their own instructional level. The faculty and staff feel that the BCPLC curriculum is also strengthened by providing “learning how to learn” activities through Project-Based Learning (PBL) in each subject course. These projects allow for greater in-depth understanding and application of critical thinking skills. PBL is often combined with larger site Service Learning Projects, thus providing real-world application and learning across the curriculum for all students and varying learning styles.

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Forest Park Elementary School

Principal: Donnan Stoicovy

Forest Park Elementary School is a public school in University Park, Pennsylvania. The school is part of the professional development school network supported by Pennsylvania State University.

Bogan Elementary School

Principal: Dee Lancaster

Bogan Elementary School, founded in 2006, is a new school in the Talawanda School District. Talawanda works with Miami University as a school partner in Oxford, Ohio.

Henry County High School

Director: Bill Webb

Henry County High School, a Kentucky Alternative School Program, is one of Henry County's new progressive educational offerings for high school students. This new alternative school program serves students reclaiming their places in a public high school.

Potential New Members Include Two Additional Washington Schools

Sehome High School, Bellingham, Washington

and

Explorations Academy, Bellingham, Washington



LODS Activities

During 2007-2008, the League of Democratic Schools will seek to:

1. Continue the development of the League so that it is helpful to the preservation and continued development of the schools involved. Site visits by regional coordinators will be important and of most benefit if arrangements are made for the coordinators to interact with key members of the school district or governing group for the school. In addition, we will continue to seek alliances with other initiatives that have similar aims to the League. We anticipate paying increased attention to helping schools engage effectively with the communities they serve.
2. Provide professional development that will strengthen the schools' capacity to function effectively as democratic schools. During site visits by regional coordinators, we hope that at least one specific professional development activity jointly planned by the regional coordinator and the school can be included. We hope that each school and college partner will plan for at least one professional development activity specifically designed to meet the needs of the school as it seeks to advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. During the LODS annual meeting in Seattle, we anticipate that there will be specific professional development activities for the principals from member schools as well as other opportunities for networking and sharing among participants. During each of the regional meetings, we anticipate that local planning will produce professional development experiences for principals and others connected with the schools.
3. Strengthen the college partnership relationships with the schools, including strengthening ties between the NNER and the LODS. During the fall, we plan to conduct discussions with representatives from colleges in four meetings. These meetings will focus on helping colleges understand the benefits to them and to the schools in active partnership with League schools. We will encourage the colleges to strengthen existing partnerships and to help us recruit additional members. Many of the colleges will be affiliated with the NNER. In addition to the four meetings, we conducted several sessions during the NNER's annual conference in West Virginia in October 2007. These sessions were designed to provide participants with more knowledge of the League and ways in which they can increase their participation with it.
4. Expand the Western Region to include schools in California and additional schools in Washington and to continue the development of the Eastern Region of the League. We hope to add at least three schools from California and two from Washington by the time of the annual meeting in January 2008. We also hope to add four schools to the Eastern Region by the time of the annual meeting.

Membership in the League of Democratic Schools

(new members and potential members* included here)

Western Region—Regional Coordinator Antony Smith

Friday Harbor High School, Washington
Lincoln Elementary, Washington
Westside Village Magnet School, Oregon
Whatcom Day Academy, Washington
Sehome High School, Washington*
Explorations Academy, Washington*
Fairview Elementary School, California
Franklin Elementary School, California
El Vista Elementary School, California
Pleasant Grove School, California

Rocky Mountain/Plains States Region—Regional Coordinator Judy MacDonald

Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, Colorado
Lab School for Creative Learning, Colorado

New Vista High School, Colorado
Wakefield Community School K-6, Nebraska
Wakefield Community School 7-12, Nebraska
Woods Learning Center, Wyoming
University of Wyoming Lab School, Wyoming

Eastern Region—Regional Coordinators Tom Poetter and Stephanie Kenney

Central Academy, Ohio
Stilson Elementary, Georgia
Bulloch County Performance Learning Center, Georgia
Forest Park Elementary School, Pennsylvania
Bogan Elementary School, Ohio
Henry County High School, Kentucky

Regional Coordinators continued from page 1

tion from Colorado State University. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of Nebraska.

Judy has always been interested in international education. While at PSD, she served as a consultant with John F. Kennedy School in Berlin, Germany, helping to build the instructional technology and library media program. For the PSD School District, she implemented two international learning programs for teachers in the district: *World Aware* and *Walk A Mile in Their Shoes*. The former allowed teachers to live and work in a school in another country for three weeks; the latter sent groups of approximately 18 teachers and instructional aides to Mexico for cultural and language immersion.

Judy is married to Jim. They have two daughters (one in Arlington, Virginia, and the other in Manhattan) and a new first grandchild.

Eastern Region—Tom Poetter and Stephanie Kenney (Co-coordinators)

Tom Poetter is professor of curriculum studies at Miami University and currently serves as Director of the Miami University Partnership Office (www.muohio.edu/partnershipoffice). Miami University has been a member of the NNER since the early 1990s, working with area school districts and communities to improve teacher education and to enhance democratic practices in the region. The primary partnership supported by the partnership office is with the local public school district, Talawanda Schools. Bogan Elementary School, a new school in Talawanda, will be joining the League. In his more visible public work, Tom writes about partnership work, school renewal, educational policy, curriculum, and pedagogy. He looks forward to working with the LODS this year.



Stephanie Kenney has a long history of participating in and facilitating school/university/community partnership activities through grants, research, and modeling of best collaborative practices. She is the Associate Dean of the College of Education at Georgia Southern University. Her current work, locally with the National Network for Educational Renewal-affiliated Tripartite at Georgia Southern University and nationally with the Leaders for Teacher Preparing Schools and the League of Democratic Schools, is a logical extension of her goal to integrate the Agenda for Education in a Democracy throughout the curriculum, policies, and practices of the Georgia Center for Educational Renewal. Stephanie believes that the LODS provides schools in the Eastern Region and across the U.S. who "dare to make a better society" the structure to inform and sustain one another as they engage in the work of institutionalizing democratic practices in schools and their communities.



The winter 2008 edition of the *Journal of Educational Controversy*, an on-line journal (www.wce.wvu.edu/Resources/CEP/eJournal/) published by Western Washington University, will feature two articles that describe some of the many ways in which we go about the important work of the LODS. Self-described as "an interdisciplinary electronic journal of ideas," this edition of the journal will focus on "Schooling As If Democracy Matters."

Finding Our Voice: One School's Commitment to Community

by Dianne C. Suiter, Ph.D.

Taking John Goodlad's call to "enculturate the young in a social and political democracy" seriously, our small, Midwestern school begins a mindful process of helping students find their individual sense of voice as soon as the student walks through our doors. At Central Academy, a small, progressive public K-6 school in Ohio, we purposefully structure both the time and the means for students to begin to grow their voices as members of our community. We see our sense of voice as that intrinsic barometer that causes us to speak up when we think something is or isn't taking place for the good of the community as a whole or an individual within it.

With educational conversations currently bogged down across our country in the minutia of standardized test results and how to "lower the achievement gap" found in these test results, adding dimension and depth that focus on the need to sustain and nurture a generation of well-informed and productive citizens has become critical not only to the survival of schools like ours but also to the survival of a thriving and productive democracy in our country.



The Elementary Classroom: A Key Dimension of a Child's Democratic World

by Vale Hartley

How do I fulfill my role as an educator for democracy? I focus on the complex reading skills democratic citizens need for effective self-governance, the speaking and listening skills necessary for thoughtful deliberation, and the respect for diversity and minority voices required in our complex society. My classroom democratic process is a dynamic one, compiled from a variety of sources: nurturing each child, communicating to equalize power, inviting students to lead themselves in class meetings, providing opportunities for building understanding together through seminar discussions, listening to what my students say, and learning from colleagues and professional development. My goal, every day, is to invite my students into Goodlad's "human conversation."

LODS NEWS FROM CENTRAL ACADEMY MIDDLETOWN, OHIO

By Dianne Suiter, Ph.D., Principal

Last year, Central Academy, a small democratic, public school of choice in urban Middletown, just north of Cincinnati, joined the Eastern Region of the League, and members of the faculty and school community participated in the national and regional meetings. Dianne Suiter studied Educational Leadership at Miami University with Tom Poetter, Eastern Region Co-Coordinator (with Stephanie Kenney of Georgia Southern University); Dianne has been principal of the school since 2003. Central Academy typically houses 300 students, ages 5-13. Approximately 50 percent of the student body is living at the poverty level. The remainder is very heterogeneous, from children being raised by grandparents to children in nuclear families of lawyers and doctors. Approximately 35 percent of the student body is of color, which is a little more than twice the number of citizens of color in the community. The school is classically progressive, focusing on multi-age grouping, democratic governance, and project-centered curriculum. Please contact Dianne with questions at dsuiter@middletowncityschools.com.

When our teachers have an opportunity to come to the meetings of LODS, they come back with a different level of insight and questions when we attack our day-to-day issues and planning. They look at the world differently. One of our teachers, after last year's LODS annual meeting, worked with a group of students on a student-initiated service project that was to be presented to the entire staff for consideration. Teachers typically ask operational-type questions of the students about community-type projects, but as a result of the teacher's experience with LODS, the teacher's questions for the students took on a new depth, probing issues of equity, inclusion, and community awareness surrounding the project. This led to a much more complete response to the problem by the students and a greater depth of research that led to a more service-learning approach to the project.

What we hope happens as the LODS grows is that more of our teachers will have a greater opportunity to discuss and reflect on issues of democratic schools with colleagues in similar schools across the country. We know how important this level of professional development is to our teachers, school, and especially for our students.



REMINDER OF LODS ANNUAL MEETING

JANUARY 24-26, 2008

We're looking forward to all participants (former and new friends) meeting in Seattle in January 2008 for the LODS Annual Meeting! We're especially excited about the focus on the arts in the Agenda for Education in a Democracy.

There will be two readings for this meeting that will be sent to everyone as soon as we receive all the names of participants. If you haven't already, please send the names to Elen at elenw@ieiseattle.org as soon as possible.

Thanks, and see you all soon!

League of Democratic Schools (LODS) Newsletter

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Agenda for Education
in a Democracy (AED)



Common Characteristics of LODS Schools

- **Democratic Purpose:** LODS schools believe the primary purpose of schooling is to develop in young people the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students require for successful participation in our nation's social and political democracy.
- **Student Achievement:** Students in such schools are successful academically and socially.
- **Ongoing Professional Development:** All members of the school community engage in continuous learning.
- **Approaches to Learning:** These are schools that use a wide 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 either by being small enough so that faculty members can gather as a group for dialogue or, if larger, by making other arrangements to facilitate communications among the members of the school community.

NOMINATE A SCHOOL TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER OF LODS

Know 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:

Tony Smith

ansmith@uwb.edu

Judy MacDonald

judymacd@gmail.com

Tom Poetter

poettets@muohio.edu

Stephanie Kenney

skenney@georgiasouthern.edu

