



LSDS NOTES

League Begins Second Year

League of Small Democratic Schools Notes

Volume 2 Issue 1

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Plans for 2005-2006 have been announced.

During the coming year, the LSIDS will expand. It will also pursue three major goals:

Goals:

1. Continuing the development of the League so that it is helpful to the preservation of the small schools involved.
2. Providing professional development that will strengthen the schools' capacity to function effectively as small democratic schools.
3. Strengthening the partnership relationships which the schools are involved.

To accomplish these goals,

The Institute for Educational Inquiry will:

- Conduct one meeting in Seattle to which each setting will send two representatives (one from school and one from partner) at IEI expense (at their own expense, schools may send a larger team).
- Provide financial support for the coordination of League activities, including hosting the League meeting and payment of a regional coordinator for each region.
- Have regional coordinator make at least one visit to each school, facilitate regional

meeting, and encourage further development of the "partnership" concept.

- Continue publishing the newsletter.
- Facilitate email exchanges and notices.
- Encourage cross-site visits and communications.
- Encourage expansion of interaction between League schools and their partners.
- Continue to develop and disseminate resources such as the "Communication Tips" provided during 2004-2005.
- Maintain contact with CES and First Amendment Schools networks to share information that is relevant to LSIDS schools.
- Develop with the participating schools more explicit and practical descriptions of what curriculum and student learning are like in a "democratic school."

The LSIDS schools will:

- Participate in the Seattle meeting.
- Participate in a regional meeting.
- Encourage additional schools within their region to join the League.
- Work with partners to strengthen the supportive relationship
- Communicate with other schools in the LSIDS through cross-site visits and other forms of communication.
- Provide annual progress

reports.

- Pay membership fee of \$500.
- Pay for participation in regional meeting and for "extra" people who attend Seattle meeting.

A new Eastern Region of the League will be formed and will consist of schools that are:

- Committed to the AED and committed to developing in a manner consistent with the characteristics identified for League schools.
- Willing and able to participate in a manner similar to that of the original regions.

An affiliate structure will also be established. Other networks with similar aims and commitments will be invited to participate as affiliates of the League.

In addition to the above, a special session for LSIDS member schools and their partners will be held in



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If you have items to submit for future newsletters, please email them to Dick Clark at rwcuw@msn.com

Scenes From Summer Meeting in Bend



Wilma Smith shares a reading with LSIDS representatives attending the Northwest regional meeting in Bend, Oregon, during June 2005



Dr Cile Chavez (above, left) provided leadership advice to conferees, while Paul Houston (above, right) concluded the session with a call for educators to keep their focus on preparing citizens for their role in a social and political democracy.

Summer Meeting Participants Share Ideas and Affirm Commitment to LSDS

This year, Kentucky released the results of a study of eight schools that had high student achievement, although they served students from low-income homes. Among the findings from the study was the conclusion that these schools all had a caring, nurturing atmosphere. The researchers reported that “respectful relationships were observed among adults, between adults and students, and among students.” While leadership styles varied in the schools, “all shared a collaborative decision making process. None of the schools had an authoritarian or dictatorial leader, and faculty and staff were involved in making most key decisions.” (See Patricia J. Kannapel and Stephen K. Clements, “Inside the Black Box of High-Performing High Poverty Schools,” A report from the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Lexington, Kentucky, February 2005 (p. 3).)

The findings of this study would be old news for the 26 educators from the LSDS who gathered in Bend, Oregon, in June 2005. With teachers and principals from the Northwest region of the League making presentations, the group examined the importance of building effective relationships and of some of the other critical findings from the study, such as the importance of academic focus and assessment of student progress.

At the same time as this group was meeting, another small group of educators from California, New York, Ohio, New Jersey, Georgia, Oregon, and Kentucky met to talk about future expansion of the League.



Roxanne McPherson from Lincoln School (Olympia, Washington) shared ideas on creating community

Both groups also attended plenary sessions featuring such leading educators as John Goodlad, Gene Carter, Cile Chavez, and Paul Houston.

At the end of the fourth day of the conference, educators from existing LSDS schools affirmed their commitment to continue with the League during 2005-2006, to initiate an Eastern region, and to make provisions for related networks to affiliate with the League.



EVEN SUPERINTENDENTS CAN HAVE FUN!



Mike Moody, superintendent of Wakefield Nebraska, enjoys a light moment during the Bend LSDS meeting.

Regional Coordinators Named for LSDS

Three educators with sterling credentials as educators experienced with and dedicated to the principles of the LSDS have accepted the role of Regional Coordinator for 2005-2006.

Northwest Region

Tony 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, a transitional bilingual assistant at the high school level, and 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 the Institute for Educational Inquiry's leadership program, using this new knowledge to help his school work through a refocusing process during a time of great change. This experience helped him decide to return to the university to pursue a doctorate in education at the University of Washington. He is currently writing his dissertation on the topic of

instructional coaching for middle school language arts teachers. Other research areas of interest to him include teacher-student writing conferences, reading fluency assessment and instruction, and teacher education.

Rocky Mountain/Plains Region

Bonnie Walters



After spending 30 years in public education, **Bonnie Walters** is currently Director of an Evaluation Center in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center. A native Coloradoan, Bonnie began her career in the San Luis Valley as an elementary teacher. Since that time, Bonnie has had the opportunity to view education from a variety of perspectives, including her six years as a classroom teacher; five years in the central office, most recently as Director of Curriculum and Instruction in Denver Public Schools, and sixteen years as a building principal. Her last principal assignment was Jefferson County Open School, a PreK-12 public school in Jefferson County School District, the largest school district in the state of Colorado.

Jefferson County Open School was established by parents in 1972; Jefferson County School District then made it their first district Option School. This school is known for its experiential learning curriculum and democratic practices. It was the subject of a recently released book, *The*

Good Little School (Basile, 2004). Dr. John Goodlad wrote the Introduction, and Bonnie wrote the Preface.

Prior to taking the position at Jefferson County Open School, Bonnie was Associate Director of the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal, one of 24 sites in the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER). Much of her work involved helping to establish School/University partnerships among member districts and IHEs. During her time at the Colorado Partnership, the Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI) in Seattle, Washington, selected Bonnie to participate in their Leadership Associate Program. For the required inquiry project, she and the Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Colorado State University conducted their project on Democratic Schooling.

In 1989, Bonnie was selected to represent the NNER as one of sixteen educational leaders representing the nation's three major educational reform movements; the task was to collaborate on a project designed to study leadership and school reform. The NEA and Danforth Foundation funded this multi-year project. Bonnie was a contributing author to the final product, a book entitled, *Journey to School Reform: Moving from Reflection to Action through Storytelling* (Wallace, 1996).

Bonnie holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree from Adams State College and a K-12 Principals License from the University of Denver.

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Regional Coordinators, continued.

Eastern Region

Steve Thompson



Steve Thompson (left) planning for new region with Dick Clark

Steve Thompson is Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

His career includes experience at all

age levels of schooling and at the local, regional, and national levels. As a classroom teacher, Steve taught in multi-age elementary classrooms, middle school social studies teams, and in a small alternative high school, all in Colorado.

He worked as a Staff Development Specialist with secondary schools in the Pomona Schools in Los Angeles County and as a Program Manager in a Teacher Corps project at The Pennsylvania State University training teachers for rural Appalachian schools. His administrative experience also includes work as an elementary school principal in West Linn, Oregon, and as Director of Curriculum Instruction, and Evaluation at the Clackamas County Education Service District near Portland, Oregon.

He worked for ten years as a staff member of the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I|D|E|A|) in Dayton, Ohio, including spending time as its President. I|D|E|A|, an operating educational foundation delivering programs for school improvement and leadership development, is best known for

the I|D|E|A| Fellows Program and the school change program, Individually Guided Education (IGE.)

Since 2002, Steve has worked with the Ohio High School Transformation Initiative of the KnowledgeWorks Foundation coaching large high schools converting to smaller, more personalized schools.

While at Miami University, he has taught leadership classes and participated in the University's partnership initiatives.

Steve attended Pomona College, the University of Northern Colorado, LaVerne University, and completed his doctorate at The Pennsylvania State University.

He met his wife, Bonnie, while they were teaching middle school together, which she continues to do, along with conducting workshops across the country for math teachers. Steve and Bonnie reared two sons, who are now young adults beginning careers of their own. Steve's interests include vegetarian cooking, backyard astronomy, reading, and walking.

NOMINATE A SCHOOL TO BE A NEW MEMBER OF THE LEAGUE OF SMALL DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS.

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

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Steven Thompson	thompss3@muohio.edu
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Agenda for Education in a Social and
Political Democracy



Common Characteristics of LSDS Schools

- **Democratic purpose:** LSDS schools believe the primary purpose of schooling is to develop in young people the knowledge, skills, and dispositions 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.
- **Small size:** They are small schools – small enough so that faculty members can gather as a group for dialogue.

LSDS Meeting Scheduled for January 26-27-28 , 2006

Reporting Requirements for 2004-2005

All LSDS schools agreed to provide required semiannual documentation of their work as part of their application to the League. For 2004-2005, that documentation will consist of:

- (1) Completing a written two- to three-page summary description of the work related to the Agenda for Education in a Democracy and the work of the League that the school has done during 2004-2005 to be

completed prior to the start of the 2005-2006 school year.

- (2) Forwarding copies of "school report cards" for 2004-2005, as such reports are required by state and federal mandates.
- (3) Forwarding copies of any research reports prepared by the school or by outside agencies concerning the school during 2004-2005.

- (4) Submitting reports of any cross-site visits completed during the year.

