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Update

OCTOBER 2006

From The President



Have you had your learning today? As a professional learning specialist in a metro area school system, I have to continuously ask myself that question. Usually I'm so busy making sure everyone else is learning that I forget about myself! Have YOU had YOUR learning today?

Take a few minutes to share the learning you experienced with Kay Burke at our fall conference, held in September. Kay shared powerful information with us about assessing student learning and about how we continue this work in our learning communities, an area in which we as a state need to improve, according to our SAI data on professional learning. (The SAI is the Standards Assessment Inventory, available to all of us on-line, through Georgia's DOE, and created by the National Staff Development Council).

To continue this focus on the areas in which we need to improve, Joellen Killion, Director of Special Projects for the National Staff Development Council, will join us at the spring conference on March 14 and 15 at the Atlanta Airport Marriott. Joellen will work with us to improve our evaluation of professional learning. This is probably my greatest challenge and I'm sure many of you will agree. Like Kay, Joellen is a dynamic teacher and excellent model of high quality professional learning. You'll love her!

One of my greatest pleasures as a school leader is to watch the excitement in the eyes of a teacher who is discovering the delights of high quality professional learning. I am encouraging teacher leaders and school leaders to attend our conference in March, and hope that you will do the same in your districts. Scholarship winners from our Academies will be named at the March conference. GSDC scholarships one person for each advanced academy from the Basic Academy, and one from an advanced Academy to the National Staff Development Council's Academy. What an opportunity! Academy graduates will be recognized in March as well.

GSDC is pleased to announce the Mary Margaret Frazier Scholarship. This scholarship is in memory of Kathy O'Neill's mother. Kathy is Executive Director for GSDC and has held this position for many years, in addition to being a past president of GSDC. Because Kathy is a former principal and superintendent, it is our goal to scholarship one principal or superintendent for one year of conference registrations. **If you are interested in nominating your principal or superintendent for this scholarship, please send a ONE PAGE letter of nomination to larnau@uga.edu by December 8, 2006.** The Board will choose the winner at the January board work session. Please include all relevant contact information for both you and your nominee in addition to your letter of nomination.

Thanks to our board members who work tirelessly to move us toward the goal of every educator having high quality professional learning every day. Have you had YOUR learning today?



Kay Burke
Keynote Speaker



President Lea Arnau welcomes
the assembly



Good Interaction!



Good breakouts!



Officers and directors installed

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THE 2007 SPRING CONFERENCE

Time to start thinking about March 14 and 15, 2007, at the Atlanta Airport Marriott?!

Joellen Killion, Special Projects Manager for the National Staff Development Council, will work with us at our spring GSDC Conference these dates on *evaluation*. And why should you attend?

- Evaluation is a part of a continuous improvement process that allows staff development leaders to know what is working and what is not, based on evidence rather than hunches.
 - Evaluation gives us evidence to increase our impact on teacher practice and student learning.
 - We have so much data about our work. Evaluation gives us an opportunity to turn the data into information we can use to strengthen our work.
 - Evaluation is often scary work. In reality, it is an inquiry process that enlightens us.
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DISTRICT III IN THE NEWS

Alton C. Crews Middle School, Gwinnett County, won a \$10,000 grant in recognition of the training and planning time the school gives its teachers. The school was one of 16 from across the country named a 2006 *Intel and Scholastic School of Distinction*. The awards program, sponsored by the Intel and Scholastic corporations, recognizes schools that use innovative programs to improve student learning. For example, at Crews Middle in Lawrenceville, teachers meet weekly to analyze test scores and other data to determine where students are struggling the most. They spend part of every Tuesday morning in training. On Thursdays, teachers meet by subject or grade level and share ways to improve their lessons. Whenever teachers are not teaching, they are working to become better, Principal Gene Taylor said. "Professional development is our bread and butter," Taylor said. "Our students will only be as strong as our teachers." The school will use a large amount of the grant to improve technology and offer more teacher training programs.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT KEY TO TECH SUCCESS

"A new survey of teachers and their use of technology suggests there is a clear correlation between hours spent in professional development, classroom integration of technology, and improved student performance. The study, *Teachers Talk Tech 2006: Fulfilling Technology's Promise of Improved Student Performance*," polled some 1,000 K-12 public school teachers on technology's role in the classroom. The percentage of teachers reporting they did not receive any professional development in the use of technology dropped by 12 percentage points from 2005 to 2006. Still, at least 19 percent of teachers interviewed said they did not have any professional development training in the past 12 months, according to the study. Despite this gap, researchers contend there is a clear link between professional development in technology use, classroom integration of technology, and improved student performance. According to the survey, 78 percent of teachers who have had at least 16 hours of professional development in technology say they incorporate 21st-century skills into their curriculum, and 66 percent believe teaching those skills strengthens skills for standardized testing. Similarly, 74 percent of teachers who have had at least 16 hours of professional development believe students' academic performance is enhanced with the use of classroom computers, the study found -- that's 9 points higher than the percentage of teachers overall who hold this belief.

TEACHERS NEED MORE "CAREER HELP"

"Head teachers must ensure staff get the chance to develop if they want to raise standards," according to a statement from England's Office of Standards in Education, called 'Ofsted'. In a survey of 29 schools in England it found career advancement opportunities for teachers of some subjects were inadequate in "about a third". However, there was "much good practice", especially where there had been a rise in standards, Ofsted said. Head teachers should be made more aware of their role in career development, Ofsted added. It carried out surveys in 14 primary, 13 secondary and two special needs schools. The report - "*The Logical Chain: Continuing Professional Development in Effective Schools*" - found that, in the best schools, teachers and support staff were given a wide range of coaching and mentoring. Ofsted's curriculum manager, Jane Joyner, said: "Continuing professional development (CPD) is most effective in schools which understand and realize its potential for raising standards. In the less effective schools in terms of CPD, the needs of individual teachers require better identification and the impact of CPD arrangements should be evaluated."

SEND HELP TO STRESSED PRINCIPALS

In a typical week, school principals confer with teachers, return calls to angry parents, do paperwork, oversee after-school activities, discipline students, do paperwork, deal with late buses, investigate vandalism, go to meetings at central office, do paperwork and otherwise support learning in their schools. But who supports principals? It's a question communities must consider if they want to keep well-qualified candidates in the pipeline for a job whose pressures have grown exponentially with the rise in state mandates and advent of "No Child Left Behind." Cincinnati Public Schools, for example, has replaced a third of its principals in the last three years, and many suburban districts are on the hunt. In a typical workweek - note, 62.21 hours long - principals spend half their time on parent issues, discipline, community relations, facilities, safety and budget. They spend a measly 16 hours on curriculum development, planning, student assessment and professional development - the very things that education reformers say produce academic improvement. But like the jugglers they feel themselves to be, it's hard to know which ball to release. The real answer, however, seems to be not to drop balls but to add other sets of hands. Researchers call this distributed leadership. Across the nation, highly skilled teachers are lessening principals' load and widening their own expertise by designing curriculum, spearheading research, analyzing data and leading training. Also local efforts, such as the administrative development academy between the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Public Schools, that helps identify and develop prospective principals and continues to support them once on the job.

Why not invite a colleague to join the only professional association in Georgia that has the development of human resources as its exclusive focus - the Georgia Staff Development Council. The mission of the Georgia Staff Development Council is to promote the development of educational personnel in order to improve student learning by providing leadership, by modeling and disseminating effective staff development practices and by serving as the state network for individuals and organizations responsible for growth of others.

Who is eligible to join GSDC? Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Directors and Coordinators of Professional Development, Personnel, Curriculum, Special Education, Chapter I and other district level programs, Principals, Assistant Principals, Lead Teachers, Classroom Teachers, Consultants, Teacher Trainers, RESA and GLRS Personnel, College and University Personnel and State Department of Education Personnel.

Download a membership application from <www.gasdc.org> - under "members" and recruit.