



Michigan Department of Education
Instructional Excellence Conference Summary
December 9-10, 2004

INTRODUCTION

On December 9-10, 2004, approximately 210 Michigan educators assembled at the Michigan State University Kellogg Center for the Instructional Excellence Conference and Network of Michigan Educators Event. The purpose of the conference was:

- To share promising practices that address how to design and deliver instruction that engages students and deepens knowledge
- To provide support systems to high priority schools
- To learn from front line educators
- To uplift the education profession
- To expand and activate the Network of Michigan Educators
- To maximize the involvement of the Network in improving education in Michigan

Those in attendance included: elementary, middle, and high schools teachers and administrators from Michigan's high priority schools and the Network of Michigan Educators. The Network is comprised of 400 educators recognized through the Michigan Teacher of the Year Program, Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, Milken National Educator Award, National Board Certification, Christa McAuliffe Fellowship Program, Michigan Elementary-Middle School Principal of the Year, National Distinguished Principal, Michigan Secondary School Principal of the Year, Michigan Superintendent of the Year, and National Science Foundation Einstein Fellows. Dave Borth, chair of the Network, and Ben Perez, consultant with Transformations, facilitated conference activities.

Day One: "Leadership for Change" was the focus of the activities on December 9, 2004. Dave Borth provided an overview of the Network, its membership, the mission and organizational structure of the group, and the achievements of the Steering Committee to date. The mission of the Network is "to connect, enable, and engage the diverse gifts of its membership for the advancement of high achievement and excellence for Michigan students and educators." The Network adopted seven initiatives:

1. Develop Action/Study Teams - organized around subject content areas, current issues, and/or policy issues based on the adult learning model from the Michigan Curriculum Frameworks.
2. Uplift the Education Profession – the Network is a visible presence representing the excellence exhibited in schools and classrooms every day.

3. Provide policy makers with value-weighted opinions on current issues and policy decision
4. Mentor members and legislators
5. Assist the Department with High Priority Schools.
6. Maintain open communications with the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the Legislature.
7. Assist the Department with the annual recognition event and instructional excellence conference.

The recognition banquet, sponsored by DTE Energy Foundation, celebrated the commitment and excellence of Michigan Educators. DTE Energy Foundation's commitment to community building was evidenced by their financial support of this event and by the presence of Mr. Winston Feeheley, Legislative Liaison with DTE Energy Foundation's Lansing Office, who thanked the educators for all they do to help Michigan children learn. The Network recognized the DTE Energy Foundation for their contribution to the success of the Network event and gave Leadership Awards to Kathleen Straus, Jean Shane, Tom Watkins, and Pam Wong. Mr. Jim Seasley and Mr. Arlyn Boorsma presented the Michigan Teacher of the Year, Heidi Capraro, with several technology tools on behalf of the SMARTer Kids Foundation. Also joining the recognized educators at the banquet were State Board of Education members Kathleen Straus, Herbert Moyer and Liz Bauer; Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins; staff from the Michigan Department of Education; and representatives of many state-level education associations.

Day Two: Yvonne Caamal Canul, Director of the Office of School Improvement, welcomed the December 10, 2004, participants. State Board President Kathleen Straus, in her keynote, challenged the participants to be "an ambassador...for public education." Tom Watkins, Superintendent of Public Instruction, provided an update on the Cherry Commission, No Child Left Behind, and the financial concerns facing districts. The balance of the day focused on sharing promising practices and providing support to high priority schools.

The following summary has been prepared to further guide the work of the Network and High Priority Schools. Questions regarding the conference may be directed to: Jean Shane, shanej@michigan.gov or 517.241.2375; or Betty Underwood, underwoodb@michigan.gov or 517.335.3401; or Margaret Madigan, madiganm@michigan.gov or 517.373.4231.



Collaborative Partners Working to Improve Education

the
Network
Of Michigan Educators



I. Network Meeting- December 9, 2004

Dave Borth provided an overview of the Network, its membership, the mission and organizational structure of the group, and the achievements of the Steering Committee to date. Members of the Steering Committee are: *Dave Borth-Chair, Lauren Childs, Randy Cook, Sherry Cormier-Kuhn, Delores Flagg, Nancy Flanagan, Sue Gutierrez-Secretary, Cindy Hasselbring, Kendra Hearn, Jeff Holbrook, Jim Linsell, Frank Miracola-Vice Chair, Berna Ravitz, Beth Rayl, and Mike Stinnett.*

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Action/Study Teams

- ❖ The Network is actively connecting educators across the state to look at critical issues, reach out to others, and develop personally.
- ❖ The Network’s Action/Study Team Collaborative is establishing and guiding a statewide system of Action/Study Teams designed to advance the learning and collaborative efforts of Michigan educators to improve student learning across all settings.
- ❖ Values: Diversity of cross-district organization teams, structured for face-to-face and electronic opportunities for collaborative learning, designed by topics dependent on Network educator interests, and sustained over time to ensure the development of collegial teams.
- ❖ Network support of action/study team facilitators. The group will utilize DuFour’s Professional Learning Communities and Garmston and Wellman’s Adaptive School.

Policy Making

- ❖ A quick-response survey tool has been established whereby the Network can respond to policy questions posed by the State Board of Education, legislators, the Governor, or the Steering Committee.
- ❖ The Network membership will work to develop mentoring relationships with their local legislators.
- ❖ The Network will continue to build and maintain its positive relationship with the State Board of Education.

Communications

- ❖ Blackboard technology has been established as the communications tool for the Network thanks to Frank Miracola and the Macomb ISD.
- ❖ Zoomerang is the survey tool, provided by The Hawthorn Learning Center and coordinated by Dave Borth, which will be used in polling Network members for feedback on policy issues.
- ❖ A website will be established for the Network.

II. Summary/Commitments to Action

Action/Study Teams: There are two pilot action/study teams. Lauren Childs and Nancy Flanagan will facilitate an Action/Study Team focused on developing skills for leading teams, and Randy Cook will facilitate one on an environmental study. Study/Action teams will report to the Network on a yearly basis. They will make presentations at conferences and to policy makers.

Policy Action Team: Refined the survey process for the "Ask the Network" project; sent out an event evaluation survey to participants; and established a policy advisory committee.

Communication Action Team: Established a Blackboard site for discussion, collaboration, and planning; is working on a Network website; is developing a news release and a plan for cross organization communication and collaboration.

III. Reflections from Participants – December 9, 2004

- I grew immensely: 1. A better understanding of the MDE 2. "Results Require Resources" 3. New group of educational support 4. I won the MI-Map kit!
- The opportunity to meet and discuss issues with other colleagues. Opportunity to find a way I can participate and help educational issues and concerns.
- I'm in a network that will have some clout, finally.
- Renewing my spirit with educators in Michigan.
- Networking with others around the state.
- An opportunity to network, a time to share the vision for "Uplifting Public Education"
- I feel empowered and much less isolated.
- An opportunity to work with very positive people!
- Professionally, I feel invigorated by being in the midst of such extraordinary individuals. Having the opportunity to discuss issues that are relevant in my role as an educator is key to my professional well-being. I met quite a few educators in the break out groups who share common educational interests. I met educators that are using strategies that I am interested in incorporating into our mathematics program. They are involved in cultural programs that are of interest to me.
- Knowledge of our mission and ideas and updated info from Kathie G's session to share with my colleagues.
- An opportunity to meet with educators from other parts of the state. It gave me a way to be connected and feel there is an opportunity to be heard and help guide the course of public education with keeping the students as our focus.
- Meeting and talking with other professionals; hearing their concerns and solutions; a better understanding of how we could possibly influence the decisions the MDE makes.
- Networking with other professionals and learning about the network. Session of Friday added to my idea base about technology.
- Meeting a lot of new people, gaining an understanding of what the network is. Seeing ways I can influence change.
- Conversation and networking with other educators from around the state... professional development.
- Jim Linsell's Reflections' session was awesome!
- By far, the most valuable gain from this event was connecting with my colleagues and having a structure that will enable me to stay more connected. That will make professional growth easier and will hopefully help me to influence the direction that education in Michigan is taking.
- Meeting "accomplished" educators from all over Michigan and I was able to share with other professionals and gain awareness of educational issues from very informative colleagues! The collaboration that was taking place during this event was enormous!!
- I met teachers from other parts of the state who teach the same grade. We plan to have our classes collaborate on future projects. I enjoyed talking with administrators and the superintendent who

attended. I also enjoyed meeting and talking with Superintendent Watkins and our (State) board of education president.

- Gaining renewed vigor to continue to strive for excellence in the classroom - it fired me up! Also, it was good for reinforcing what I am doing in the classroom. I learned more about the political arena as well.

IV. Participants

Phyllis Adkins, Rosemary Amene, Suzanne Antonazzo, Michelle Ballard, Leah Barnett, Diane Baumstark, Suzanne Beute, Ann Marie Borders, Dave Borth, Cathleen Brackett, Jeffrey Bradley, Lisa Briegel, Jean Buller, Heidi Capraro, Victoria Catalina, Lauren Childs*, Jeanine Clever, Ron Collins, Patricia Colthurst**, Randy Cook (TCHS), Randy Cook (JPS), Sherry Cormier-Kuhn, Conni Crittenden, Kathy Dascenzo, Mark Davids*, Patricia Denton, Thomas Dolan, Mary Edmunds, Michael Ehmann, Bud Ellis, Bev Fanelli, Delores Flagg, Nancy Flanagan, Jill Fleming, Constance Flynn, Susan Fraelich*, Mandy Frannti, Mary Fudge, Joan Garretson, Kenneth Gillam, David Glenn, Julia Green, June Green-Rivers, Kathie Grzesiak, Susan Gutierrez, Tim Hammar, Char Hanchak, Monica Harrold, Jere Hassberger*, Cindy Hasselbring, Julie Helber, Janice Henderson, Beverly Hill, Amy Hodgson, Margaret Holtschlag, Sharen Howard, Kyle Hughes, Rose Jakab, Dara Johnson, Sandy Joslin, Penny Joy, Nancy Joyce, David Kapolka, Thomas Kelly, Susan Kielb, Kathleen Kosobud, Robert Kosztowny, Kimberly Kyff, Jean LaPointe, Elizabeth Larwa, Doug Law, Janet LaVasseur, Gerald LeCureux, Jane Levy, Mary Lindow, Jim Linsell, Matt Ludwig, Fe' MacLean, Marlenn Maicki, Chris McAuliffe, Linda McConville, Rita McNeely, Frank Miracola, Barbara Misuraca, Ann Murphy, Roger Moore, Angela Newing, Suzanne O'Brien, Patricia O'Connor, Pamela Ogle, Janet Oord, Cathy Owens, Carol Palombit, Janice Pardy, Bob Pennock, Linda Peterson, Dorothy Riley, Jeffery Robinson, Sandra Truitt Robinson, Verna Rollins, Dale Rosene, Marsha Sakwa, Stu Schultz, Maureen Schwartzhoff, Jennifer Smith, Diane Spence, Robert Stephenson, Mike Stinnett, June Teisan, Mary Tomaszewski, David Truog, Karrie Tufts, Miriam Turner, Gretchen Vermiglio, Candace Walters, Vikki Wandmacher, Cheryl Wells*, Janice Wetters, Sarah White, Rosa Williams, Victoria Wilson, Wendy Winters, Christa Wise, Lisa Wollet*

(*Thursday only: **Friday only)

(Districts represented included: Addison, Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Berkley, Big Rapids, Birmingham, Brighton, Carman-Ainsworth, Chippewa Valley, Dearborn, Detroit, Detroit Academy, Dexter, East China, Farmington, Flat Rock, Flint, Forest Hills, Fowlerville, Fremont, Grandville, Grosse Pointe, Hanover-Horton, Harper Woods, Hartland, Haslett, Huron Valley, Jackson, Kalamazoo RESA, L'Anse Creuse, Lansing, Lapeer, Lincoln Consolidated, Livonia, Lowell, Macomb ISD, Marquette, Marshall, Midland, Milan, Munising, Niles, Northville, Northwest, Oakland Schools, Okemos, Plymouth-Canton, Portage, Rochester, Romulus, Royal Oak, Saginaw, Saline, Saugatuck, Southfield, St. Joseph, Traverse City, Tri County Area, Van Buren ISD, Van Buren PS, Walled Lake, Waterford, Waverly, Western, Whitmore Lake, Williamston, Ypsilanti. Nonpublic Schools represented included: Cranbrook, Detroit Country Day, St. Peter's Lutheran/Big Rapids)

I. Sharing Promising Practices – December 10, 2004

Educators chose to participate in one of ten sessions led and facilitated by staff from the Office of School Improvement and members of the Network.

A. TECH is NOT a Four-Letter Word

*Marion Ginopolis, Director LEADing the Future, The Michigan Gates Program,
Jane Perzyk, LEADing the Future Team Member*

Description: The focus of this “high-touch/high-tech” interactive presentation is on the use of technology to enhance educators’ efforts in improving school performance and student achievement. Participants will observe demonstrations and experience the use of various technologies used in the Michigan Gates Program, LEADing the Future, which impact productivity, efficiency and data management.

B. Mathematics Differentiation and the GLCE

*Kathie Grzesiak, Teacher, Midland Schools
Ruth Anne Hodges, Mathematics Consultant, Michigan Department of Education*

Description: This session will highlight differentiation of mathematics instruction for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classrooms. Using the Michigan Curriculum Frameworks and the Grade Level Content Expectations, examples will be given on how to approach differentiation in the classroom.

C. Moving Toward Best Practice: Examining the MEAP and the GLCE in the Context of Authentic Instruction

Troy Hicks, Assistant Director, The Writing Center, Red Cedar Writing Project, MSU

Description: This condensed version of a one-day workshop will invite K-8 ELA leaders to examine how best practices in literacy instruction are conducive with the GLCE and MEAP. Participants will engage in collaborative discussions and interactive demonstrations about strategic reading and writing skills in the context of classroom instruction and testing situations.

D. MI-MAP: Tools to Help You Get From High Priority to High Performing

Pat Meaux and Linda Smith, MI-Map Support, Michigan Department of Education

Description: MI-Map provides practical strategies and materials to shape, support and sustain system-wide innovation and school improvement. This session will give participants the opportunity to learn about and peruse practical strategies and activities within 38 topics to support and sustain school improvement efforts.

E. Reflection as a Tool to Deepen Students’ Understanding of Content Standards and to Promote Growth as Learners

Jim Linsell and Karrie Tufts, Traverse City Schools

Description: Reflection as a tool to deepen students’ understanding of content standards and of themselves as learners is receiving much attention in national professional publications. This session will provide theory, research, and practical strategies for integrating routine student and teacher reflection into all subjects, grade 5 and above.

F. Science: The Michigan Curriculum Framework Science Benchmarks in the Lab

Heidi Capraro, Michigan Teacher of the Year 2004-2005, Middle School Science Teacher, Northville Public Schools

Description: Mrs. Capraro will lead participants through the Michigan Curriculum Framework Science Benchmarks, middle school objectives. Discussion of correlation between district and state benchmarks

will be addressed. Participants will engage in science activities designed to teach some of the middle level benchmarks.

G. Assessing Michigan's Grade Level Content Expectations: The Latest Information

Bill Brown, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Michigan Department of Education

Description: This session will provide participants with the latest information regarding assessment from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Assessment and Accountability. Information regarding the new grade level tests for English Language Arts and Mathematics as well as Social Studies and Science MEAP information will be presented.

H. Successful Instructional Strategies that Work with English Language Learners

Kathy Storchan, Wayne RESA and Joan Peterson Littman, Farmington Schools

Description: Presenters will share checklists that reflect current standards for instruction for English Language Learners. Special emphasis will be given to promising strategies that work with all At-Risk students and are effective with English Language Learners.

I. Grade Level Content Expectations Companion Documents in English Language Arts

Vi Davis-Littles and Gale Sharpe, Grade Level Content Expectations Support, Michigan Department of Education

Description: An overview of the ELA GLCE companion documents will be shared with those attending this session. These include correlation documents to the MCF, Reading First and MLPP. In addition, a training module and parent documents will be discussed. Participants will receive a CD of the GLCE documents.

J. Service-Learning: Improving Educational Performance

JeanineYard, Learn and Serve Program Officer, Michigan Community Service Commission, Diana Algra, Learn and Serve Policy and Partnership Coordinator, Michigan Community Service Commission

Description: Service-learning is a powerful strategy for improving educational performance, preparing students for careers, supporting school improvement, and contributing to community renewal. Participants will learn how service-learning can be implemented to enhance the educational experience and make learning relevant for students in high priority schools.

II. Table Discussions – December 10, 2004

A. What is going well in your school?

- Great communication skills with parents, students
- Parent friendly
- Parent involvement
- Award events
- Teacher collaboration
- K-12 staff working together well
- Excellent principal leadership
- PD better when district recognizes the individual needs of the staff
- Math taught across the curriculum
- Scheduling: regular and block that meets the needs of individuals
- Unit level benchmark assessments: using to develop curriculum and measures
- Upper elementary coming with ability to learn cooperatively
- Engagement and attendance have gone up because of cultural learning activity

- Individual student intervention plans having impact
- Data is driving instruction
- Curriculum up to speed
- Changing elementary...understanding of different groups is increasing
- Common GLCE and assessments
- FIA offices in school: positive connection between parents and schools

B. What are the challenges?

- Specialized needs of grade levels
- Curriculum focus
- Establishing collegial culture
- Changing student demographics
- Media – outside influence: misperception and inaccurate information about urban schools
- No time to implement professional development
- Fragmentation of roles of school leadership
- Huge increase/decrease in student enrollment
- How to focus resources
- Integrating new information and tools into instruction
- Special Education needs
- “Train and Pray” model of PD vs. accountability vs. union pushback
- Overcrowding and mobility of students
- Lack of parent involvement
- Lack of sensitivity of Central Office to building leadership to assess and plan PD
- Poverty and insecurity for students
- Extending promising practices beyond Network
- Using the Network to foster pursuit of excellence
- Transportation and social integration of 9th grade
- Teachers and others resistance to change
- Excellent teachers being discouraged from mentoring
- Union contracts that enable mediocrity
- Growth of data to absolute measure
- Coordination of assessment: not stack-up assessments
- Instructional time taken up by testing
- No one talks about funding

C. How can we use the network of educators?

- Sharing strategies, action research plans, electronic communication
- Linking educators across field to share best practices
- Get word about Network out to all groups...new teachers, legislators
- Leverage for state legislation
- Subscript for Network – define a standard of excellence
- Collaboration across the State of Michigan

III. Reflections from Participants – December 10, 2004

resources
synchronicity
inspiring
connect/share

connectedness
possibilities
optimistic
reflect

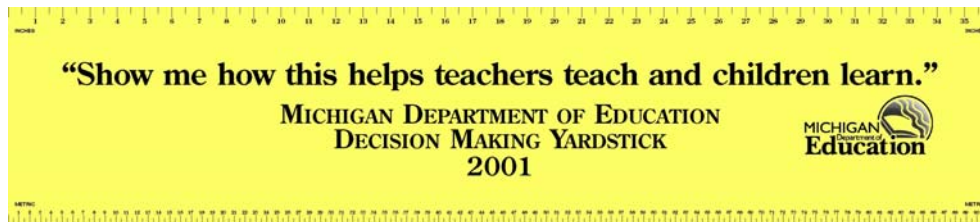
enlightening
expanding
invigorating
uplifting

collaboration
liaison
motivating
connections

Participants

Miriam Adams, Janice Anderson, Wilma Arnold, Allan Barra, Bob Batjes, Betty Bianco, Jerilee Bouma, Susan Bowden, Whitney Brodus, Sharine Buddin, Janet Bunton, Gus Calbert, Tom Carlson, Kevin Carney, Betty Chapple, Sue Chartier, Pat Coles-Chalmers, Jean Cummings, Walterzene Dabney, Beverly Davis, Mildred Davis, Camela Diaz, Carol Disler, Rob Durecka, Deborah Dushane, Gloria Ealy, Russ Fimbinger, Alesia Flye, Carol Garland, Lloyd Gingerich, Patricia Gonser, Jacqueline Gravely, Chris Hammill, Judy Handley, John Harberts, Erica Harris-Robinson, Robert Hock, Georgia Hubbard, Ricky Jones, Alicia Kubacki, Rita Linnankugel, Betsy MacLeod, Phyllis Martin, Yvonne Mayfield, Robert McBroom, Bobbi Morehead, Karen Morrison, Roselyn Northcross, Suzanne Palte, Sally Perkins, Yvette Pinchem-Stewart, Sally Polk, Julie Rosekrans, Michele Sandro, Marc Schroeder, Matt Schwartz, Sharon Staff, Jim Steere, Kirk Sulzman, Paulette Thomas, Beverly Tolliver, Regina Turner, Robert VanCamp, Theresa Whitenight, Office of School Improvement Staff, the Network of Michigan Educators participants from December 9, 2004, Kathleen Straus, Tom Watkins, Pam Wong,.

(Districts represented included: Academy of Westland, Adrian, Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Bridgeport-Spaulding, Covert, Detroit, East Detroit, Fennville, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Harrison, Kalamazoo, King Academy, Lansing, Pontiac, Port Huron, Saginaw, Southfield, Utica, Wayne-Westland, Woodward Academy, Ypsilanti...along with those listed in the December 9, 2004 summary.)



Sponsors

State Board of Education, Michigan Department of Education, DTE Energy Foundation, MSU Kellogg Center

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