



August 2007 Newsletter Update

Highlights of Upcoming Events!

August 25, September 8 & 29, October 6 & 20, November 3 & 17, and December 1
SEI for the Diverse Educator

September 6-7
Learning-Focused Presenting

September 10-12
Leading for Sustainability and Capacity Building

September 15
National Board Certification: Kick-Off to a New Year

September 24-26 and December 6-7
Critical Friends

October 4, 11, 18, 25, and November 1
Technology Integration: Podcasting

did you know?

Learning communities, or communities of practice that impact student achievement have several distinct attributes:

Members work together at least several times a week to learn with and from one another. Their sole purpose is to improve teaching and student learning.

Learning communities are guided by shared goals and norms of continuous improvement and experimentation. They work as a team of peers rather than as an expert-driven team.

Learning communities set goals about student learning and focus exclusively on the day-to-day work of teachers.

Learning communities have strategies and structures to guide their work. They receive training in facilitation skills and have a clearly defined set of norms to guide their work.

Learning communities, when they have these four essential attributes, engage teachers in genuine collaboration that is professionally respectful, relevant to their day-to-day work, and aligned with their professional responsibilities and goals.

Source: By Joellen Killian, Teachers Teaching Teachers (T3), April 2006

A New Standard of Professional Development

Nothing impacts student performance more than their teachers. But the challenges of the classroom do not remain static. New conditions are continuously emerging to which teachers must respond, including emerging best practices, trends in technology and changing demographics. This means that to be at their best, teachers need to keep learning.

On this point, Kristin Metler-Armijo, president of the Staff Development Council of Arizona (SDCAZ), which promotes quality professional development, couldn't be more emphatic. "As an educator, if I am not continually looking for ways to better teach my kids I am almost practicing a form of professional negligence," she says.

Unfortunately, quality professional development hasn't always been readily available to Arizona teachers. But a new emphasis on a standards-based approach is leading to new opportunities for teachers to learn.

Standards for professional development have been established on a national level by National Staff Development Council (NSDC). Through the work of SDCAZ and other organizations, including the Arizona K-12 Center, these standards are becoming more known and accepted statewide.

"The understanding of the need for professional development is growing as educators get more knowledgeable," says Tamara Honvlez, SDCAZ vice president. "School districts are really looking at how quality professional development is effecting student achievement."

The good news for teachers is that through the application of NSDC standards, changes in the culture surrounding professional development are afoot.

"Many teachers relish the idea of learning something new and using it in the classroom, says Metler-Armijo. "They should be seeing many more opportunities to do so."



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EVENT SPOTLIGHT

SEI for the Diverse Educator

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| Dates | August 25, September 8 & 29, October 6 & 20, November 3 & 17, and December 1, 2007 |
| Location | Arizona Education Association, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix |
| Times | 8:30am-3:00pm |
| Cost | \$450 |
| Deadline | August 17, 2007 |

Reflect on the theory and practice of teaching children who are learning English as a second language. Certified trainers will prepare educators for ethnically diverse classrooms in which there are students learning English as a second language. This course meets the 45-hour requirement that is part of the 60-hour requirement for a Structured English Immersion (SEI) endorsement. Areas of focus include: ELL Proficiency Standards, Data Analysis, Formal and Informal Assessment Objectives, SEI foundations, SEI strategies, and Parent/Home Scaffolding.

A New Standard of Professional Development

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One idea taking hold is the importance of job embedded programming – that more professional development should occur during the normal work day. Honvlez reports that more “districts have allocated time within the instructional day, like early release or late start.”

This helps to relieve the time crunch many teachers experience. In addition, it nurtures a “learning community” environment within the school itself, so that younger teachers may be more likely to ask a peer for advice or share a successful strategy.

The second significant change is the shift toward on-going learning. “Now we are asking – what are we doing to sustain teacher learning in Arizona,” Honvlez says. “We know a lot of professional development is going on, but how effective and how sustainable is it?”

NSDC standards call for the “one shot workshop” approach to be replaced with a strategy of continuous dialogue, which supports teachers

throughout the learning and implementation process. This has been shown to be far more effective than simply having teachers attend a one time event that has little to no follow-up in the workplace.

The focus on NSDC standards brings a new level of consistency, quality and relevance to professional development in Arizona, which teachers can rely on. “Teachers need to know that anyone who designs professional development should be held accountable for reaching those standards,” says Metler-Armijo.

The increased interest in quality professional development is reflected in the growth of the SDCAZ, which is the Arizona affiliate of the NSDC. “Over the last 8 years 20-25 of us have kept the SDCAZ afloat,” says Metler-Armijo. “Now in the last year and a half there has been a resurgence and we are up to 250 members.” Members include teachers, coaches, principals, superintendents among others. You can learn more about SDCAZ at SDCAZ.org.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Cheryl Bokowski



An event planner by profession, Cheryl manages the professional development training and events throughout the year. If you’ve been to an AZ K-12 event, you’ve probably seen Cheryl on the front line answering questions and directing traffic.

Many educators who have attended our events comment on the first class treatment they received. Cheryl, who previously did event planning at the exclusive Boulders Resort in North Scottsdale, is thrilled to hear it. “We truly believe that they deserve it,” she says.

Cheryl is an Arizona native who grew up in Sierra Vista, southeast of Tucson. She studied at Northern Arizona University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Computer Information Systems.

Cheryl has always thrived when she feels a real sense of purpose. When she was a fourth grader, her school decided to try to earn a free Apple computer through the Apples for Students program. Under an agreement with the local grocery store, students were supposed to collect cash register receipts, whose totals would serve as points earned towards the free computer. That was the school’s goal—one free computer. But Cheryl thought she could do better. She stood outside the supermarket and collected receipts from all the customers. Soon she was bringing in tons of receipts and inspiring whole classes to do the same. In the end, the school earned eleven new computers, with Cheryl accounting for three on her own.

She’s bringing this same sense of purpose and possibility to her work at the Arizona K-12 Center. “I’m back in touch with my passion now,” she says. “I truly believe in the vision of the Center. Giving teachers the tools they need impacts so many lives. It’s a privilege to help make it happen.”

“I’m back in touch with my passion now”

Who Are We?

A staff of experienced educators.

The Arizona K-12 Center staff consists primarily of former educators. From kindergarten through high school, we have worked in some of the most culturally diverse and educationally challenging environments in Arizona. This gives us an intimate understanding of the challenges today’s educators face. We’ve been there ourselves, and are committed to helping make the teaching experience as successful and satisfying as possible.

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| Executive Director | Kathy Wiebke |
| Associate Director, Operations | Josie Arredondo |
| Associate Director, Policy & New Programs | Penny Kotterman |
| Professional Development Coordinator | Cheryl Bokowski |
| Master Teacher Coordinator | Andrea Boorman |
| Project Director, Master Teacher/NBC | Taryl Hargens |
| Project Director, SEI | Cathy Hill |
| Project Director, Mentoring/Induction | Judy Rea |
| Administrative Assistant | Cyndy Rodgers |

Need more information?

Programs, conferences and more information is available at our website:
www.ask12.org

