



Highlights of Upcoming Events!

Jan 10-11, 2008 and Feb 28-29
Adaptive Schools

Feb 8-9, Mar 14-15, April 25-26, and May 9-10
Cognitive Coaching (Phoenix)

Mar 14-15, April 18-19, May 2-3, and May 30-31
Cognitive Coaching (Tucson)

Mar 31, April 7, April 14, April 21, and April 28
Technology Integration: Digital Storytelling

EVENT SPOTLIGHT: National Board Pre-Candidacy Classes

Dates	January 10, 17, 24, and 31, 2008 and February 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2008
Location	Arizona Education Association, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix
Times	4:30pm-7:30pm
Cost	no charge
Deadline	12/14/2007

If you are a candidate for National Board Certification, you are not alone. Pre-Candidacy classes introduce you to the National Board Standards and the process of National Board Certification. As part of the process of National Board Certification, you will complete a portfolio and complete six assessment center exercises. You will take stock of your own teaching practices and the results achieved in your classroom. It is through this self-reflection that you can become an even stronger educator. This class is a prerequisite for teachers receiving fee assistance from the Governor's Master Teacher Program through the Arizona K-12 Center.

Master Teacher Mentoring

TAKING TEACHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The beauty of the Arizona Master Teacher program is that it addresses two needs simultaneously. High turnover rates among new teachers clearly show the urgent need for dedicated support. And who better to provide this support than teacher mentors who have excelled in the classroom themselves. Perhaps less obvious, is the need these experienced teachers have to leverage their talent and wisdom into greater leadership roles within their learning communities.



Cecilia Lynch, Master Teacher Mentor in the Paradise Valley School District, had been teaching for 29 years when she got her Master Teacher designation. "The program has made a complete difference in my thought process," she reflects. "At one point I was close to retirement and now I'm rejuvenated and love learning again."

Part of this sense of rejuvenation comes from the satisfaction of seeing new teachers take suggestions from their mentors and run with them.

"Talking with a teacher about a strategy then coming back and seeing her using it—that is so incredible," says Darcy Jack, a Master Teacher Mentor in the Tucson Unified School District. "Clearly the teacher felt ownership of the strategy to implement it; that's why mentoring is so amazing. If it's done right, there's a very high level of implementation."

THE MENTORING RIPPLE EFFECT

Another aspect of becoming a Master Teacher Mentor that inspires teachers is the broader platform it gives them to make a difference in the education of many children. Leah Esmont, Master Teacher Mentor at Washington Elementary in Phoenix notes:

"You make an incredible impact in your own classroom, but when you have the opportunity to work with other teachers, the number of children you impact becomes exponential."

In Esmont's case, she coaches 15 teachers. Estimating that each elementary school teacher has a class of 25, that's 375 kids whose quality of education she's affecting, as compared to just a class of 25 of her own. But the Master Teacher Mentor ripple effect spreads even wider when you consider that the teachers she mentors collaborate with other new teachers, sharing findings and strategies that work.

Also, since professional habits of teaching are largely established in the first three years, Master Teacher mentoring sets the tone for an entire career. Figured in this manner, it's difficult to put an actual number on how many students a single year of Master Teacher mentoring can impact, but

clearly it's in the hundreds if not the thousands. Interestingly, it's not just the new teachers who are gaining greater insight and wisdom about teaching.

"The Master Teacher Program provides a great opportunity, from the application process all the way to becoming a mentor," says Dede Fejes, Master Teacher in the Fowler Elementary School District. "It gives you a different perspective on education, on the good practices you've always known, and on closing any gaps you might have. I've realized that I can learn from anybody, doesn't matter how long they've been in the profession."



FROM INCEPTION TO REAL RESULTS

It's not often in education that one has the privilege of seeing an idea for making a difference take form into an actual program that gets implemented and then yields measurable results. If the Master Teacher Program seems particularly near and dear to the Arizona K-12 Center, it's because several staff members have nurtured it from its very inception.

When Governor Janet Napolitano took office in 2002, she began asking teacher leaders what it was that Arizona's schools needed most urgently. According to Penny Kotterman, the Center's Associate Director for Policy and New Programs, then the President of the Arizona Education Association, the consensus was, "more support for quality teachers." At that time, only two or three districts had full-time mentoring programs in the entire state. The Governor herself came up with the term Master Teacher.

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Master Teacher Mentoring

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Along with Kotterman, the Center's Executive Director, Kathy Wiebke, who worked at the Arizona Department of Education at the time, was involved in the preliminary discussions that led to the program's genesis. They realized exactly how high a priority the Master Teacher Program would be when the Governor announced it as a proposed policy initiative in her State of the State address in 2004. Ultimately, the Arizona K-12 Center was charged with building and implementing the program.

Taryl Hargens, now the Master Teacher Program Director, who had been a teacher in the Paradise Valley School District at the time, was hired by the K-12 Center to provide the perspective and expertise of a recent classroom teacher to the effort. Much hard work followed including the



development of a single state-wide application and the recruitment of potential teachers.

Like any new program, Master Teacher did not take off without a few bumps in the road. The first year, the Center received only 12 applications; this after nine months of intensive recruiting and visiting with over 20 school districts. "We thought teachers would jump at the chance," says Penny Kotterman. "Thank goodness we got some applications, but so few."

The biggest obstacle at the time turned out to be the extensive personal reflection required. "Teachers initially find that remarkably difficult but incredibly empowering," Kotterman notes.

Apparently, word of the rewards of becoming a Master Teacher is getting around. As of this academic year (07-08), the program currently has certified 69 Master Teachers, with the goal having 100 by the end of the year. That will signify going from zero to 100 in just two years.

The results thus far in terms of teacher retention have been dramatic. The program was initially

rolled out in schools most in need as defined by their high poverty, high teacher turnover rates or high number of new teachers. From a 60% overall retention rate three years ago, these schools now show an overall 74% retention rate, which is 5%

higher than state average. Also, within these high needs schools, 497 teachers have now completed Individual Professional Development Plans, indicating not only the intention to keep teaching, but to do so at an enhanced level.

"It's exciting to be part of a bigger picture," says Taryl Hargens. "Master Teacher

has given me the opportunity to see the impact teachers can truly make and how they can build capacity in their schools through mentoring."

"I consider Master Teacher one of the most rewarding accomplishments of my whole career," says Kotterman. "To start something from just an idea and watch it transform into an amazing program with amazing results is just phenomenal."

No doubt many teachers and many Master Teacher Mentors would agree.

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Did You Know

The Master Teacher program currently has annual state funding totaling \$3 million. The Center's goal is to increase funding to \$7-\$10 million. This would provide for a Master Teacher in every school building in Arizona.

The Master Teacher program also funds scholarships and support for up to 150 National Board candidates a year.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, The cost of teacher attrition in Arizona is \$88 million dollars, NOT including retirements.

According to the New Teacher Center at UC Santa Cruz, a quality mentoring program provides a return on investment after only five years of \$1.66 for every \$1.00 invested.

Staff Spotlight: Taryl Hargens, Master Teacher Project Director



Taryl keeps a busy schedule. When she's not coordinating behind the scenes, you might run into her at a Mentor Academy, a National Board Certification large group meeting or Pre-Candidacy class, or in a Cognitive Coaching workshop.

A third and fourth grade classroom teacher for 15 years, Taryl started teaching on the island of Maui. She went there for a year and stayed for ten. She returned to Phoenix in 2000 and taught in the same Paradise Valley School District where she attended as a student growing up.

Taryl achieved National Board Certification with a Middle Childhood Generalist Certificate in 2004 and became involved with the Center through her activity in candidate support.

"Leaving the classroom was a big step," she says, "I always saw myself as a teacher.

But I have no regrets about making the move. My work at the Center has really given me an opportunity to better understand the diverse needs of educators in Arizona and specifically how teacher leaders can effect change."

Both of Taryl's parents were educators. And recently, her ten year old daughter, Taylor, announced she wanted to be a teacher too. In fact, she is already working on developing some teaching tools in the form of games and songs.

“That makes me feel even more responsible for helping to create an environment where new teachers have the support they need to succeed.”

See Taryl in Action on YouTube.com!
Search *National Board Certification*

The next portfolio application deadline is February 28, 2008. Check out www.azk12.org for more details!