



Highlights of Upcoming Events

October 24, 2009

PASS Fall Forum (Yuma)

**October 29, November 5, 12, & 19,
December 3, 10, and 17, 2009**

National Board Pre-Candidacy Class (Tucson)

November 7, 2009

Coaching Saturday

November 14, 2009

PASS Fall Forum (Phoenix)

November 21, 2009

Tools for Systems Thinking

EVENT SPOTLIGHT: Tools for Leading Systems Thinking in Our Schools

Dates November 21, 2009 & May 1, 2010

Location Arizona State University - SkySong
1475 North Scottsdale Road

City Scottsdale

Times 8:00-4:00pm (Registration 8:00-8:30am)

Cost \$100

Deadline 11/06/2009

Notes Registration includes registration for both Part I and Part II, continental breakfast, lunch, breaks and materials.

This series is open to any participant that attended the Arizona K-12 Center's Fourth Annual Teacher Leadership institute. Individuals or teams who attended may register additional participants from their district in order to have them join their team.

Tools for Leading Systems Thinking in Our Schools Part I and II are designed as follow-ups to the systems thinking introduction presented at the Fourth Annual Teacher Leadership Institute in June 2009. These workshops will provide an extended introduction to systems thinking and its connections to critical leadership skills and school improvement efforts. During the workshops, participants will:

- Develop skills and knowledge in the use of systems thinking concepts and tools.
- Experience, practice, and discuss interactive, inquiry-based professional development and school improvement strategies.
- Use systems thinking tools to analyze complex issues and identify high leverage interventions.
- Develop and share a plan of application relevant to school leadership.

From Scottsdale to San Manuel – Cohorts Come Together for Take One!

Excellence is often associated with exclusivity. Being the best means being better than the rest. But what many Arizona teachers are discovering is that excellence is most readily reached through a team effort. In fact, it's the support of peers that makes excellence not only possible, but worth pursuing. This is the case with cohorts currently going for *Take One!*, the unique offering from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that provides a standards-based approach for improving teaching practice and linking student learning to effective instruction.

At Yavapai Elementary in South Scottsdale, all 49 teachers and administrators are participating in *Take One!* this year.

"We had heard about National Board many times through our district," says Yavapai Principal, Wendy Cohen. "Then we found out about *Take One!* There's no requirement on how long you have to be teaching, and it's not as big a commitment as going for full Certification."

The school organized a meeting, and with the help of the Arizona K-12 Center, presented this opportunity to its staff. Nearly everyone wanted to participate, and those who were less enthusiastic were soon caught up in the excitement and got on the bandwagon as well.

In Mammoth-San Manuel Unified School District, northeast of Tucson, a *Take One!* cohort has also accepted the challenge. This small, rural district only employs about 70 teachers. Of these, approximately 14 have opted to pursue the program this year. Again, the Center has been closely involved in organizing and encouraging teachers to participate.

"What's happening in San Manuel and at Yavapai shows how hungry teachers are to reflect on and enhance their practice," says Kathy Wiebke, the Center's Executive Director. "It also shows that teachers are eager to collaborate with one another rather than simply being isolated to their individual classrooms. We're thrilled to help facilitate this collaboration."

STREAMLINING IN SCOTTSDALE

At Yavapai Elementary, a key component of gaining this near unanimous participation was that the school proposed to roll all of its professional development requirements for the year into this single unified effort.

"To make it work for our teachers who are already carrying full schedules we decided to focus all our professional development



Julie Torres (left), National Board Certified Teacher, is a facilitator working with the San Manuel cohort.

time on *Take One!*," says Cohen. "It's the most productive and effective way we could use that time."

The cooperation and creativity of the Scottsdale Unified School District was essential. School improvement initiatives, Career Ladder and Pay for Performance planning all had to be aligned to support teachers to pursue *Take One!*

"There's just not enough time in a teacher's day to add on more requirements," says Andi Fournalis, Director of Recruitment and Professional Development. "So we had to get the right people at the table with a willingness

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From Scottsdale to San Manuel – Cohorts Come Together for *Take One!*

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to think creatively. Our attitude was whatever it takes to make it work, we'll do it."

Funding is provided through the Arizona K-12 Center, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and Title I funds.

"We're really pleased to be supporting this effort both with funding and expert guidance through the process," says Kathy Wiebke. "*Take One!* and National Board Certification help teachers not only improve their practice but become leaders in the education community. So it's well worth the investment."

LOCALIZING THE PROGRAM IN SAN MANUEL

In San Manuel, making the most of teachers' time has meant bringing the resources to them.

"We're a rural area and it takes our teachers hours to travel for professional development to Tucson and back, and a full day to go to Phoenix," says Mary Kyle, Administrative Assistant for Student Achievement. "So for the Arizona K-12 Center to come to us here caught our teachers' attention."

As is the case with many teachers, for the San Manuel cohort, the information in National Board handouts and on the web site wasn't

enough. These teachers needed to hear from other teachers who had been through the experience. Only then did they understand the opportunity they had to grow professionally.

"I've spoken to a lot of people in education who say 'we'd love to work with your district,'" recalls Ron Rickel, San Manuel-Mammoth Superintendent. "But Kathy is one of only a very few who ever followed up. She got in her car and drove here and made it happen."

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In addition to Kathy Wiebke's presence at preliminary meetings, the Center has also sent coaches to provide the necessary support and guidance. Perhaps just as significant is the fact that because the teachers responded in numbers, they can turn to one another as well.

"There's a real feeling of doing it together," says Mary Kyle. "They are willing to put themselves out there to say: tell me how I can do it better. You don't find many professionals willing to do that. These folks are committed."

In this sense, the cohort itself, with the support of facilitators, represents the ultimate localization of professional development.

THE PROOF IS IN THE CONVERSATION

One of the most powerful benefits of *Take One!* and National Board Certification is they both engender in-depth reflective conversations about teaching. In effect, each of these conversations forms a professional development opportunity in and of itself.

At Yavapai, Wendy Cohen is already noticing the impact. "The culture has changed," she says. "There's more collaboration from day one, also between different grade levels. Teachers who are on the same path in *Take One!* are seeking each other out to talk, even after school, when it's not scheduled."

Mary Kyle sees a similar excitement in San Manuel. "People were really energized about this. When you start a school year it's an avalanche of things you have to do. It can be just exhausting. I give them so much credit -- this is quite an adventure they're taking on here."

To learn more about TakeOne! visit azk12.org.

LEADERS IN ACTION: It Takes a Team to Make a Team



Taryl Hargens (pictured) Project Director, Arizona K-12 Center

Mary Zongolowicz (pictured) National Board Certified Teacher, Scottsdale Unified School District

Megan Kraatz (pictured) National Board Certified Teacher, Scottsdale Unified School District

Wendy Cohen Principal, Yavapai Elementary

Andi Fournalis Director of Recruitment and Professional Development

Bobbie Faulkner Career Ladder Peer Evaluator, Scottsdale Unified School District

Marilyn Zolondek Teacher, Yavapai Elementary

Before the entire staff of Yavapai Elementary School could enthusiastically sign up for *Take One!*, the way had to be cleared for them by a group of dedicated educators. It began with Marilyn Zolondek, who teaches fourth grade at Yavapai, and was already familiar with National Board Certification having completed her candidacy. She'd originally heard about National Board through the Center. Zolondek encouraged Principal Wendy Cohen to present *Take One!* to the rest of the school. Cohen then turned to the District to help make it possible.

Andi Fournalis, Director of Recruitment and Professional Development for the Scottsdale Unified School District got excited with the idea. "I was absolutely inspired by what they are doing," says Fournalis, "how everyone from instructional assistant to principal is participating." Fournalis helped to reshape district requirements so they accommodated the Yavapai cohort. Working with her was Bobbie Faulkner, Career Ladder Peer Evaluator, for the Scottsdale Unified School District, who helped ensure the teachers would be properly credited for their

efforts. Together, these leaders helped turn Yavapai's enthusiasm into a rich professional development opportunity.

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