

NNER NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 2

December 21, 2001



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THOUGHTS ON AN AGENDA FOR EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY

As our nation responds to the September 11 attacks, we are called to examine the fundamental freedoms that are central to our democracy. In one of his best-known speeches, Franklin Delano Roosevelt enumerated "four freedoms."

For the settings in the NNER, building democratic character is a more complex challenge than reciting slogans. Still, the message of FDR's speech demands our attention.

Sixty years ago on January 6th, 1941, less than a month after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt spoke eloquently to a nation stunned by the brutality of the attack. Using a phrase others have attributed to Benjamin Franklin, FDR asserted "**those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.**"

In this state of the union address, he reminded all that "the basic things expected by our people of their political and economic systems are simple. They are:

Equality of opportunity for youth and for others. Jobs for those who can work. Security for those who need it. The ending of special privilege for the few. The preservation of civil liberties for all. The enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress in a wider and constantly rising standard of living."

He concluded the speech by stating the four essential human freedoms: **freedom of speech and expression, freedom from want, freedom of worship, and freedom from fear.**



Franklin Delano Roosevelt

"Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Our challenge in helping to produce the "good society" that FDR envisioned is to ensure that the teachers we educate and the students enrolled in our schools understand not only the importance of each of these freedoms but the way in which they are interdependent. For example, without freedom from want, we are unable to pursue the other essential conditions. We cannot have freedom of worship or freedom of speech without freedom from fear; if we are fearful, we are hindered as we seek the basic necessities of life. While they have not been given as much attention as the "four freedoms," the basic expectations identified by FDR are critical to the preservation of our freedom. Consider that without equality of opportunity for youth and others, the notion of freedom from want rings hollow. Without ending special privilege for the few, it is difficult to preserve freedom of expression or freedom from fear.

As we pursue our Agenda, we must educate prospective teachers and the students in our schools so that from an early age people understand the centrality of such freedoms and are unwilling to give up such basic expectations and freedoms.

This has not been an easy year, and these are not easy times for our society, and certainly not for those of us who care deeply about simultaneously renewing our schools and the way we prepare educators. Given the redirection of national resources to war and the impact of the economic downturn on our states and philanthropic organizations, we need to be especially careful to continue to put forth the ideas we believe will make a difference in public education in the United States. I am convinced that the National Network for Educational Renewal, and the institutions and individuals that compose its membership, are in a position to sustain change unlike any other group of educators. But we may well find that we are at the center of controversy as we pursue that change.

Many of you have seen the lead article in the November issue of AERA's *Educational Researcher*, "Sticks, Stones, and Ideology: The Discourse of Reform in Teacher Education" by Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Mary Kim Fries. The authors lay out the stark differences between those who argue for the professionalization of teaching and believe that well-prepared teachers will make a substantial difference in the quality of a child's education (NCTAF, NCATE, NBPTS) versus those who argue for virtually total deregulation of entry into teaching and who would allow high-stakes tests to be the sole gatekeeper (the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research). As the title of the article suggests, its focus is on the discourse used to argue for each position and the extent to which rhetorical moves obscure substantive arguments in the positions of both camps (p. 13). The use of evidentiary, accountability, and political

warrants to argue for its position forces each side to construct "its own case as if it were neutral, apolitical, and value free, based solely on the empirical and certified facts of the matter and not imbedded within or related to a particular agenda that is political or ideological." (p. 6.)

Ours is not a neutral or value-free position, which is why we describe our work as a moral agenda. We must not hide from that.

We side with those who make the case for well-prepared teachers, but we go beyond that by affirming critical grounding and moral dimensions that undergird our work. Standing, as we do, for a position on the role of public education in providing access to knowledge for all children and for reclaiming the role of public education in preparing each generation for life in an emerging democratic society, along with our stance on the conditions necessary to produce high-quality teachers, opens us to the "criticism" that we do have an ideological, philosophical, and even political stance. Ours is not a neutral or value-free position, which is why we describe our work as a moral agenda. We must not hide from that.

If we are to make progress in the changes we seek, I would argue that

we have to focus even more on understanding the grounding that we operate from. We need to continue to discuss the meaning of democracy and social justice. We need to be clear about what providing access to all children means, especially when we know of the inequities that exist in such access. It is much easier and safer for us to spend our time developing structures or following externally dictated standards, as important as they may be, than to carry on the difficult discussions in our own settings, our own states, and nationally. Unless all of us, in public schools, in the arts and sciences, and in education sustain the conversation about what does matter most, we stand to lose ground in the current political and economic climate. And we lose ground primarily at the expense of poor urban and rural children.

That having been said, I am more optimistic than ever. We have a strong, morally grounded network coming off an exceptional annual meeting. We take a clear position on what we believe in and stand for. We have continued interest from partnerships seeking to join in our work. And, with the appointment of Dick Clark as Executive Director, we are in a position to enhance our communications and seek additional resources. I am grateful to Dick for undertaking this position and for already beginning to provide much needed support and infrastructure.

I hope all of us have a productive and happy new year, and I look forward to seeing many of you in New York at the AACTE annual meeting.



Tell Your Story

We are looking for brief articles that report work in progress at the various settings of the NNER. Each story should be 250-500 words long and explain

how readers can learn more about the activity being described.

Submit your article via email to nhouston@u.washington.edu.

Clark Elementary and St. Louis Consortium a Hit in Missouri and Denver

Teachers and the principal from Clark Elementary School in Webster Groves, Missouri, had anticipated attending the NNER Annual Meeting in Denver in October and presenting with their Maryville University colleagues on the activities of the partnership, most especially on the research taking place at Clark, which focuses on the "essence of caring" through the use of the moral dimensions.

However, after hearing Clark teachers and Maryville faculty talk about their partnership work at a local school board meeting in the spring, the board requested that Clark submit a proposal to the Missouri School

Boards' Association for their fall meeting.

As it turned out, that proposal was accepted for exactly the same time period as the NNER Annual Meeting. So, Dr. Anne Leser, of Maryville University, "held the fort" in Denver while five Clark teachers, principal Todd Benben, and Dr. Nadine Ball of Maryville presented at the Missouri School Boards' Association. The focus of the Missouri presentation was on the rich experience teachers, P-5 students, and teacher education students are engaged in at a partner school.

Approximately 35 representatives from the entire state at-

tended the Missouri presentation and stayed long afterwards discussing the possibilities of developing their own partner schools.

Clark Elementary School is somewhat unusual in that it joined the St. Louis Consortium through its work with Maryville and went through the same application process (reviewing the postulates, writing an application, hosting a site visit) that the entire consortium had experienced in 1993 when it joined the NNER.



NNER Bookshelf
Readers are encouraged to share information about recent publications. Send information to Nan Houston at nhouston@u.washington.edu. Submittals should be limited to 150 words. Include author, title, publisher, and copyright date.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The **Accelerated Schools program**, formerly based at Stanford, is now located at the **University of Connecticut**.
- The **Hawaii** partnership, working with the state's NCTAF partners, succeeded in obtaining passage of legislation being hailed by some as a model for **state support of Professional Development Schools**.
- The College of Education at the **University of Washington** has received a new grant to develop models for **responsible accountability**. Ken Sirotnik and Pat Wasley head up the initiative, which has been funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Executive Committee Actions December 13 meeting

- A Study session for January 25-26 at St. Cloud was approved.
- Recommendations were developed regarding the future of multiple-IHE member settings.
- Two potential new setting applications are set for action at the Governing Council meeting in New York.
- The committee reviewed a draft set of rubrics for use in reviewing future applicants for membership and recommended a revised set to be acted on by the Governing Council in February.
- Recommendations for increasing participation of school and A&S members in governance of the NNER will be developed for action at the Annual Meeting in November 2002.
- Individual Executive Committee members accepted responsibility for making monthly contacts with settings.
- The committee approved a plan for distributing the newsletter and made recommendations concerning a brochure on the NNER.
- The committee discussed concerns for better coordination of grant proposals involving the IEI/CER and NNER settings.
- The 2002 Annual Meeting was set for November 7-9 in New Jersey, and for 2003 in Salt Lake City.
- The agenda for the Governing Council meeting in New York on February 23 and 24, 2001, was set.
- The 2001-2002 budget was approved.

For the full minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, see the web page <http://depts.washington.edu/cedren/>

National Network for Educational Renewal

NNER News

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Please submit suggestions for articles, information about people and events in NNER settings, and comments on this issue to Dick Clark
Clarkd@msn.com

Each setting is requested to copy this newsletter and make it available to school and university people participating in the work.



*In Memory of Dr. Robert L. Egbert
1923 - 2001
Teacher, Leader, Friend
Teachers College, University of Nebraska*

We're on the Web
<http://depts.washington.edu/cedren/>

THE NNER

<u>STATE</u>	<u>SETTING</u>
California	California Polytechnic State University
Colorado	Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal*
Connecticut	University of Connecticut
Hawaii	University of Hawaii and Hawaii Institute for Educational Partnerships
Maine	University of Southern Maine and Southern Maine Partnership
Minnesota	St. Cloud University and St. Cloud School District
Missouri	Metropolitan St. Louis Consortium for Educational Renewal*
Nebraska	Nebraska Network for Educational Renewal*
New Jersey	Montclair State University and the New Jersey Network for Educational Renewal
New York	The City University of New York and the New York City Public Schools*
Ohio	Miami University Wright State University
South Carolina	South Carolina Network for Educational Renewal*
Texas	Texas A&M University University of Texas at El Paso
Utah	Brigham Young University and BYU-Public School Partnership
Washington	University of Washington
Wyoming	University of Wyoming and Wyoming School-University Partnership

*multiple-IHE member settings

*Plan to Attend
NNER Open Meeting and Reception
AACTE Annual Meeting
February 24, 2001*

NNER and the February 2002 AACTE Annual Meeting

Two NNER events will be held on Sunday, February 24, at the Hilton New York and Towers, the conference hotel.

At 12:30 p.m., an open session, "The National Network for Educational Renewal: Update on the Agenda for Education in a Democracy," will be led by Nick Michelli and Roger Soder in the Trianon Ballroom. The session will give NNER settings and those interested in becoming

part of the network an opportunity to learn from one another regarding critical issues related to the Agenda.

At 7:00 p.m., a reception for NNER members will take place in the Murray Hill A Room.

Due to unforeseen schedule conflicts, we have changed the time of the Governing Council meeting. Times will be Saturday, February 23, from 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

and Sunday, February 24, from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Locations will be announced later.

Watch for announcements of individual sessions featuring NNER members.

