

# NNER NEWS

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## Confronting the Times

By Nicholas M. Michelli



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One of the themes that we have been talking about since our last NNER Annual Meeting in New Jersey, and perhaps before that, is just how we can best confront the times we face. There are many forces that require that we be proactive in our work to sustain education that attends to democracy and social justice. Two relatively new reasons, joining movements like ABCTE and the Fordham Foundation, have come to light.

First, that venerable association of state policymakers, the Education Commission of the States, has published a report entitled “Eight Questions on Teacher Preparation: What Does Research Say?” The full report, and a summary are on the ECS website at [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org). What does research say? The general conclusion, if we are to believe the findings reported here, is very little. Taking each of the eight questions in turn (for example, does subject-matter knowledge matter, does pedagogical knowledge matter, what about alternate routes or accreditation, how about field experiences?), the writers report on limited to moderate research support or inconclusive evidence. Of course, questions about education for democracy—substantive issues that focus on the purposes of public education—are not on the list.

Second, in the *Education Life*



*There are many forces that require that we be proactive in our work to sustain education that attends to democracy and social justice.*

section of the August 3 *New York Times*, a very biased article by James Traub attacks what is happening in New York City, labeling it progressive and out of touch. What is happening is a return to a more constructivist and less scripted approach to teaching literacy and mathematics. The title speaks for itself, “Klein’s Great Gamble: New York Retools its Classrooms.”

On the other hand, some positive steps can be noted, joining Dick Clark’s ongoing and impor-

tant work with journalists. First, a CUNY-sponsored study is now under way to provide some hard data on the different pathways into teaching in New York City, including those provided by CUNY’s NNER institutions. You can follow the work at [www.teacherpolicyresearch.org](http://www.teacherpolicyresearch.org). All of the instruments developed by our research team will appear there.

Second, the NNER has formed a research committee, co-chaired by Dean Cindy Chance of Georgia Southern University and me, to see what we can do to provide the research that is needed. The first meeting of the group will be at the NNER Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City. Send us your thoughts, and make sure your representative attends.

See you in Salt Lake City!

# If You Aren't Going Anywhere No One is Left Behind

Commentary — Dick Clark

Officially, politicians are acting to ensure that *no child is left behind*, but are they helping them go anywhere?

To ensure that no one is left behind, there has been massive new federal intervention in the educational system, including in the preparation of teachers. Federal spending has been increased — but apparently not by as much as state spending has been decreased. Schools have been instructed to use only research-based educational methods and to hire only fully qualified teachers. Many speeches have been given, and a PR team has been convened in the Department of Education to counterattack any who dare to criticize the effort.

As they struggle to comply with the new ESEA's requirements, most states have confined nearly all learning to what can be measured in standardized tests of reading, mathematics, and sometimes, writing. This is a ludicrously unambitious aim for education. Having established this low standard, the states are then in a position to force schools to measure the same small goals in a hundred or so ways.

Failure to make progress on any of them labels a school a failure (or, euphemistically, in "need of improvement"). Limited measures establish whether the school has made "Adequate Yearly Progress," and colleges are supposed to prepare and districts to hire only educators who are "Highly Qualified Teachers."

So what *is* happening in our school systems and colleges? Here are a few examples.

Not all the news is bad. The *Des Moines Register* reported that 90 percent of Iowa teachers meet the "highly qualified" standard.

The July 31 *Rocky Mountain News* reported that in Colorado Governor Bill Owens, a CSAP [Colorado's assessment test] advocate who twice vetoed efforts this spring by state lawmakers to reduce the testing, issued a news release applauding "continued progress" on the exams.

"We still have far to travel," said Owens, who was attending a school choice conference in Oklahoma, "but these scores show us that we're on the right path and we're moving forward."

Reading scores improved in virtually every grade from four through ten, dipping only for the state's ninth-graders. The highest achievement came in the sixth and tenth grades, where 67 percent of students scored proficient or advanced — considered the passing levels — on the exams."

In another state, a superintendent whose district will be identified as a "failing district" reported that adequate yearly progress was made on 97 of 108 separate measures required by that state's accountability system.

*As they struggle to comply with the new ESEA's requirements, most states have confined nearly all learning to what can be measured in standardized tests of reading, mathematics, and sometimes, writing.*

Elsewhere, the picture was not as rosy. In St. Louis, a slate of four new school board members was elected and the Superintendent retired. These two events precipitated the decision by the School Board to employ a corporate "turn-around" management group, headed by the former CEO of Brooks Brothers. He assumed the role of Interim Superintendent of Schools, and the group hired Dr. Rudy Crew as "educational consultant." The price tag for the team is \$4.5 million with an additional \$500,000 going for a Houston-based company to do an audit of the district which is \$90 million in the red.

As of July 15, sixteen St. Louis schools

had been closed (sending 3,000 children to different schools), the administrative office and other ancillary buildings were up for sale, the school start date had been pushed up to September 8, and it was rumored that 450 of the 700 administrative staff in the district were to be let go or repositioned (e.g., replace teachers with less tenure). It was also rumored that the entire professional development department of the district would be cut.

On July 25, the *Contra Costa Times* reported that "Seventy percent of California's public schools failed to meet the state's newest accountability measure, failing to make 'Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).' AYP is the latest state academic performance measure and was created to meet No Child Left Behind guidelines. The biggest problem for many school districts that failed to make AYP was not academic proficiency, but student participation. Federal guidelines require schools to test 95% of their students."

Also, the *Dallas Morning News* reported "Qualified Teachers Hard to Find in Texas." "Most Texas school districts are still scrambling to find enough qualified teachers, according to a study from Texas A&M University that found nearly a quarter of the 39,000 teachers hired last fall were not trained in their subjects. The study comes amid fears that the situation could worsen after the Legislature slashed health insurance benefits for all teachers."

*Continued on page 3*



(Continued from page 2)

In Philadelphia, the state commission that has replaced the locally controlled school board canceled contracts with some firms retained as private managers of local schools and assured the citizens of its ongoing commitment to this approach as it extended the practice to new firms (some run by local universities and others by former administrators in the school system).

The Alabama state board announced that it would not notify parents whose children were not being taught by someone who was not a “highly qualified teacher.”

The Secretary of Education reportedly has made a grudging admission that some of the standardized approaches to education called for by NCLB may not be appropriate for Alaska’s off-road schools. And rural communities throughout the country are saying “me too.”

The *New York Times* advises us that New York and Houston took pride in high scores in writing for fourth graders—they were near the national average on NAEP exams—however, all other tests were well below average, and black students performed poorly. Also, Houston excluded 13 percent of its students from the testing (which, ironically, in light of AYP requirement, the Department of Education said was proper).

Meanwhile, on July 26, 2003, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* reported that “sixty-five Louisiana public schools were labeled failing by the state...—50 of them in New Orleans and one in Jefferson Parish—and will face sanctions under a new, stricter accountability system required by federal law...

“In New Orleans, the troubling results, while expected, underscore the huge challenge facing the new administration of Superintendent Tony Amato. The ‘academically unacceptable’ list comprises 21 elementary schools, 13 high schools and 16 middle schools...

“In theory, federal law requires the failing schools to let parents transfer their children to higher-performing schools. But in New Orleans, there’s nowhere for them to go; the system has few high-scoring schools with openings. Instead of

offering transfers, state officials said, the New Orleans system must devise a plan to improve the failing schools...

“Orleans Parish School Board President Ellenese Brooks-Simms said Amato is moving quickly to institute ambitious reforms system-wide, including new rigidly structured and expanded language and math curricula.”

On Tuesday, July 29, 2003, the *Chicago Tribune* announced that “About half of Chicago’s public schools must allow their pupils to transfer this fall because of failing state test scores, even though scores in most elementary grades in the city improved. “Unqualified” teachers spend the summer making up for deficient public schools.”

*In the push to leave no child behind, there is no comparable demand for children to get ahead.*

In North Carolina, the *Raleigh Observer* reported on July 28 that politicians and educational experts are arguing over whether to accept a \$154 million federal grant that requires testing of young children, which for fifteen years has been forbidden by state law. The grant, to provide professional development to teachers so they can use scientifically proven methods of reading instruction, can be obtained only if the testing laws are changed.

**And so the summer went, as changes in management were made in lieu of school improvement, test scores continued to be the standard by which schools were measured, the curriculum was narrowed to focus on the tests, and school systems struggled to acquire well-educated teachers.**

One award-winning education reporter had the following to say after trying to make sense of reports in her state in summer 2003:

“As everyone predicted, results were bizarre: Some schools that “failed” were



truly dismal, while others had more than 95 percent of kids testing on grade level but fell short in one subgroup, such as special ed kids.

“I have to say, in 22 years of newspapering this may be the most effort I’ve expended for the least useful result. By the end, we’d dubbed it No Journalist Left Unscrewed.”

As tough as the law is for journalists, my biggest concern about the present approach to educational improvement is the narrow view it takes of what an educated person is. In the push to leave no child behind, there is no comparable demand for children to get ahead.

*There is no provision to develop the knowledge and skills required for citizenship beyond those of basic literacy.*

There is no call for children to develop their unique talents as individuals. There is no reward for developing the capacity to work, play, and live as part of a community. There is no provision to develop the knowledge and skills required for citizenship beyond those of basic literacy. The art that must accompany the science of teaching is ignored. **When will we understand that if we are not going anywhere, no one will be left behind?**

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# 2003 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SALT LAKE CITY October 9 – 11, 2003

The planning committee reports that the program for the Annual Meeting of the NNER is rapidly taking shape. The Thursday evening opening event, a participatory celebration of the story of the NNER, will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Wyndham Hotel ballroom.

**Deborah Meier** will be the keynote speaker on Friday morning, October 10. Meier is founder of the Central Park East Schools and currently principal of the Mission Hills School in Boston. Her latest book is *In Schools We Trust*, which Jonathan Kozol has characterized as a “wise and beautiful book.”

**John Goodlad** will close the conference with an address on Saturday noon.

The enthusiastic response to the call for proposals has provided a rich pool of topics and research reports for breakout sessions. In addition to the many proposals from individual settings, there are four, cross-institutional presentations that promise informative and lively discus-

*All settings are reminded to return updated versions of setting activities to BYU planners ASAP so they can complete their work on the materials documenting past and current work of the NNER*

sion. To facilitate discussion across settings and to broaden the conversation, some presentations will be clustered where the proposed topics are closely related.

The NNER’s new committee on research will also meet during the conference.

Transportation will be provided to Park City for those who would like to spend Friday evening enjoying a mountain setting and some wonderful dining. Planners will provide a variety of suggestions of things to do while in Park City.

## New Governance Structure to be Launched in SLC

The new Tripartite Council (TC) will meet for the first time at **7:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 9, in Salt Lake City.** The Tripartite Council will make recommendations to the Governing Council regarding the future of the NNER. (See page 7 for a story about the scenario ac-

tivity under way to help them.)

Teacher education, school, and arts and sciences constituent groups of the TC will meet for a breakfast work session on Friday, October 10.

The new Governing Council will meet twice in Salt Lake: once at 3:30 p.m. on

October 9, and again from 1:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 11.

Both groups will be electing new leadership for the NNER. Also, decisions will be made concerning applications for membership in the network and other business items.

## June 2003 Executive Committee Actions

A complete report of the June 2003 Executive Committee meeting can be found on the NNER web page at <http://depts.washington.edu/cedren>.

Actions taken included the following:

- The committee decided that in Salt Lake City, the NNER will combine three events: (1) the annual conference, (2) implementation of the new governance structure and regular network business meetings, and (3) a study committee to develop recommendations regarding the NNER’s stance on inclusiveness.
- The EC agreed that a special committee should study equity issues (see page 6).

•The NNER budget year was changed to coincide with the academic year—September 1 to August 31.

•Preliminary approval was granted for the 2003-2004 budget. It will be submitted to the Governing Council (GC) for ratification in October 2003. The EC authorized \$6,500 in additional expenditures from the cash reserves to support the special study committee on equity and to fund a reception at the AACTE meeting in Chicago in February 2004.

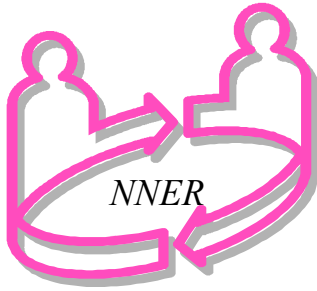
•Based on the recommendation from a visiting committee, the EC voted to rec-

ommend that the GC approve the University of New Mexico (UNM) partnership for membership when it meets in October.

•The EC approved the plan submitted by the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal for adding members.

•The committee decided that the present GC chair and the executive director will select a group to nominate a new chair.

•South Carolina was selected to host the 2005 annual conference.



## AROUND THE NNER

**Carnegie grants awarded to three NNER settings.** The **University of Washington**, the **University of Texas El Paso**, and the **University of Connecticut** are among seven institutions of higher learning—ranging from research universities to state institutions to historically black colleges—chosen to be designated *Teachers for a New Era* schools following their recommendation by a prestigious national advisory panel and approval by the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Each school will receive a multi million dollar grant over five years, which the institution must match, to reform and reinvigorate its teacher education program in line with the three design principles of the *Teachers for a New Era* initiative.

The seven institutions announced in this second round of competition join four others announced in 2002. This landmark initiative to strengthen K-12 teaching by developing state-of-the-art schools of education, which are focused on evidence-driven teacher education programs, is expected to directly influence public policy leaders concerned with the quality of the nation's teachers.

The selected settings look forward to sharing what they learn with other settings in the NNER.

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**Mary Stepling was recently appointed Department Chair of Education at Columbia College**, and as such, now serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the South Carolina Network for Educational Renewal. Stepling is an Associate Professor in Speech Pathology. Stepling

has recently served as the President of the South Carolina Speech-Language-Hearing Association, and is a 2001 recipient of the Carnegie Foundation and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) South Carolina Professor of the Year Award.

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**Sherry Palmer is the new Executive Director of the Wyoming School—University Partnership.** Palmer assumes the position this fall after having provided leadership for Wyoming's Teacher Quality Enhancement grant.

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**The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded \$10 million over five years to the State of Maine for the Great Maine Schools Project.** Ten schools have received large grants to transform education at the high school level; six large schools have received \$20,000 planning grants to "make large schools small"; one school/community college partnership has received significant funding to initiate an "early college high school," and ten additional schools have received one-time planning grants of \$10,000.

**David Ruff and Lynne Miller** of USM serve on the Policy Board of the project, which is housed at the George Mitchell Institute in Portland. The Southern Maine Partnership (SMP) co-hosted the first Great Maine Schools Institute with Mitchell; over 180 educators attended. The Partnership is charged with providing support to the grant recipients and has hired

four full-time "coaches" to do the work, which involves high schools from across Maine. Ruff and **John Newlin** have taken the lead in coaching preparation and supervision. Miller has assumed a lead role in developing the concept of "early college high schools" in the state.

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**The New Jersey Network for Educational Renewal at Montclair State University announces that Barbara M'Gonigle will be the Co-Director as of September 1, 2003.** M'Gonigle has been a clinical faculty member at Montclair State University and a math teacher at Dumont High School in Dumont, New Jersey. She has participated in Leadership Associates, written and led several Teacher Study Groups and Action Research projects in Dumont, and presented at National Network for Educational Renewal conferences.

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One hundred eighty network district teachers and administrators and Montclair State University faculty members participated in the **New Jersey Network for Educational Renewal at Montclair State University annual Summer Conference** on June 26 and 27 entitled "Teaching as Inquiry." In addition, Teacher Study Groups and Action Research Teams from district schools shared the results of their efforts in group poster sessions or individual panel presentations.

*Continued on page 8*

# Special Study to Address Critical Equity Issues

Providing access to knowledge to all and including all in the democratic processes are two principles fundamental to the work of the National Network for Educational Renewal. With this in mind, the Executive Committee of the network has charged a special study committee with providing recommendations in response to the following questions:

- ◆ How do we promote a future where people with different beliefs, values, and personal identities successfully live together in a democratic society?
- ◆ What is the role of the NNER in promoting opportunities for peo-

ple regardless of individual differences such as age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status?

- ◆ What principles of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy should the NNER encourage its members to consider when developing policy?
- ◆ How can we encourage NNER members to regularly examine their own policies and practices so that they advance the principles of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy?

The committee will meet in Salt Lake City on Thursday, October 9,

2003, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to develop preliminary recommendations. Additional time will be available on Saturday afternoon if the study committee needs it.

Following the meetings in Salt Lake City, study committee members will review the preliminary recommendations via email and submit the committee's final recommendations by December 15, 2003, for consideration by the Governing Council.

## NNER Research Abstracts Sought

Researchers from NNER settings are invited to share abstracts of studies completed within the past twenty-four months. We are seeking abstracts from school teachers and administrators, faculty from the arts and sciences and education, departments, as well as from graduate students.

Abstracts may be of studies published or awaiting publication in other sources, or they may be of research reports not otherwise being considered for publication.

The first round of NNER Research

Abstracts was posted on our website in May 2002. Now more abstracts are needed.

Abstracts should be 150 to 300 words in length and should include information about the researcher that will permit those reading the abstract to make contact for more information about the study. They should also include a brief statement of key findings from the study.

A three-person panel will review each of the abstracts and rate it on the significance of the research and the

clarity of the statement. Those accepted may be edited prior to publication.

*Send your research abstracts to Dick Clark at [rwcuw@msn.com](mailto:rwcuw@msn.com).*

They will be posted on the NNER web page and will be shared via email with NNER members. If a sufficient quantity of worthwhile abstracts is received, we will compile them and include them in an annual monograph.

## Study Sheds New Light on Alternative and Traditional Approaches to Teacher Education

A recent study reports that first-year teachers have similar concerns whether they are prepared through traditional or alternative routes. However, alternatively licensed teachers indicated higher levels of concern in almost every case, particularly in issues related to effective in-

struction and classroom management dimensions of their work.

**Jeffrey C. Wayman, Ann Foster, Corinne Mantle-Bromley, and Carol Wilson** drew these conclusions in "A Comparison of the Professional Concerns of Traditionally Prepared and Alternatively Licensed New

Teachers," in the February/March 2003 issue of *High School Journal*.

The study examined concerns expressed by nearly four hundred first-year teachers in Colorado.



# SCENARIO PLANNING FOR NNER TRIPARTITE COUNCIL

In Salt Lake City the NNER Tripartite Council will recommend strategies that should be employed by the network in the coming years.

During July, members of the new council responded to a survey, indicating their concerns about the network and the context in which it will operate.

A planning group met in Seattle on August 5-7 and used survey responses to begin the process of developing scenarios.

Led by expert **David Chrislip**, NNER and IEI representatives **Bernard Badiali, Dianne Bath, Ron Cambra, Connie Donvito, Dennis Potthoff, Hugo Lara, Deborah Shanley, Carol Wilson, Ann Foster, John Goodlad, Roger Soder, Cori Mantle-Bromley, and Dick Clark** considered strategic questions facing both the NNER and the Institute for Educational Inquiry

and then began to construct stories about the world in which these strategic questions will need to be answered. For the NNER, the questions that emerged from analysis of survey responses included:

- What are future funding sources?
- How do we sustain the NNER's vision, mission, and focus? (Communicating, inside and outside)
- How will the NNER influence political policy and at what levels?
- How does NNER manage growth and membership? Who and how many?
- How will the NNER "live the agenda"?

The group determined that the network's future will be driven by the political landscape, citizens' commitment to engagement, the economic and social stratification of our population, the messages communicated by the media, and the advances of technology.

Next, participants completed preliminary outlines for four scenarios that they believe to be plausible, relevant, provocative, and divergent stories about the future environment in which the NNER will operate.

Group members will test the scenarios with small groups in September.

In Salt Lake City the Council will use these stories to help evaluate existing NNER activities and generate recommendations to the Governing Council.

Deborah Shanley (CUNY) [far left] comments on a driving force as [left to right] Bernard Badiali (Miami), Dennis Potthoff (University of Nebraska at Kearney), Hugo Lara (Guadalupe School District), Dianne Bath (Bullock County Board of Education, Statesboro, Georgia Schools), and Ann Foster (NNER Executive Director) look on.



# 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 at

rwcuw@msn.com.

## Dates and Locations for Future NNER Annual Meetings

**2003 — Salt Lake City, Utah  
October 9-11**

**2004 — St Louis, Missouri  
October 21-24**

**2005 — South Carolina**

## AROUND THE NNER

*continued from page 5*

### ***Major changes under way in St. Louis Consortium affect work of NNER setting there.***

A new school board majority, massive school closures, and the hiring of a private management firm to lead the district are among the changes in St. Louis.

The impact, so far, on Consortium work at Roosevelt High School is that of the approximately 80 staff members, 21 will be let go, thus increasing class size.

Yet to be seen is the impact of this on the intensive and productive work gains from last year when teachers met daily

in professional growth teams facilitated by teachers representing a building-level Leadership Council.

This summer, two Leadership Council retreats, facilitated and planned by the Consortium, were held (June 23 and July 14). The retreats were designed to plan ahead for the coming year with the hope that progress will continue. An all-day retreat is also planned for the Leadership Council in August.

As these changes occur, there appears to be an even greater need for members of the Consortium and, especially, faculty members in the arts and sciences and education to work closely with

Roosevelt to continue the professional development work already begun. St. Louis anticipates sharing with NNER colleagues the latest in this saga in October at the Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City.

### ***New Program Coordinator at the IEI:***

NNER members will be hearing from **Elen Ward-Pazdziernik** in the months ahead. Elen has joined the IEI staff and will be providing direct support to the NNER, including producing this newsletter.

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

## THE NNER

### STATE

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Georgia

Hawaii  
ships

Illinois

Maine

Minnesota

Missouri

Nebraska

New Jersey

work for Educational

New York

Ohio

South Carolina

Texas

Utah

Washington

West Virginia

Wyoming

### SETTING

California Polytechnic State University

Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal\*

University of Connecticut

Georgia Partnership for Educational Renewal at Georgia Southern University

University of Hawaii and Hawaii Institute for Educational Partner-

Illinois State University (Normal)

University of Southern Maine and Southern Maine Partnership

St. Cloud University and the St Cloud School District

Metropolitan St. Louis Consortium for Educational  
Renewal\*

Missouri University Partnership for Educational Renewal

Nebraska Network for Educational Renewal\*

Montclair State University and the New Jersey

Renewal

The City University of New York and the New York City Public  
Schools\*

Miami University

Wright State University

South Carolina Network for Educational Renewal\*

University of Texas at El Paso

Brigham Young University and BYU-Public School Partnership

University of Washington

Benedum Collaborative at West Virginia University

University of Wyoming and Wyoming School-University Partnership

\*multiple IHE site settings

***NNER Annual Meeting  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
October 9-11, 2003***