

GCER Tripartite Meeting Notes

June 5, 2009

Attending: Danny Edenfield, Pat Parsons, Bob Lake, Barbara Mallory, Jeremy Foreman, Eileen Bayens, Stephanie Kenney, Wendy Chambers, Dianne Bath

Jeremy Foreman was welcomed to the group. Jeremy works with Hands On Ogeechee a service oriented organization and has been working with the PLC. He has a wealth of service learning experience and knowledge to bring to the group.

League of Democratic Schools Eastern Region Meeting Update - Stephanie Kenney attended the meeting in Pennsylvania and reported that it was a really great meeting. There were two school visits arranged for participants to see the work of students in a democracy focused school. In the morning an elementary school was visited where students led the honors program assembly and in the afternoon a high school where students were engaged in the decisions in the school. The LODS partners brought students to the conference and a powerful piece was the level student engagement by students in the schools and between the visiting students and the students in the schools. Stephanie reported that there are video recordings of some of the conference experience and that we might want to use that as a part of one of our meetings. The next annual meeting is to be at Brea College in Kentucky and we have the challenge of funding some students to attend with us. Jeremy shared there may be service learning grant money to support training and travel of students. There are other schools who might be offered the opportunity to join such as Bartlett Elementary in Chatham County.

LODS Update from PLC - Danny Edenfield gave an update on the work he is doing at the PLC. He shared his partnering with GSU Deb Sabio and Todd Deal to do some future service learning and mentoring of students. He is starting a media center to be run by the students and shared the challenge of funding to get this up and going. He gave an update on the Community Garden Project and the need now to place a shed in the garden area for students to work in and protect them somewhat from the sun and rain. The Garden Project was named the Keep Bulloch Beautiful Project of the Month. Jeremy Foreman discussed how some of the service learning that he is involved with could easily fit into the work of the LODS. Barbara Mallory stressed the importance of making sure what you did integrated into the curriculum and standards schools are responsible for delivering.

LODS Update from Stilson - Eileen Bayens shared her work of getting the faculty buy-in to the agenda. She has planned for August and September to use the AED agenda publications to engage the faculty in reading and sharing thoughts about the readings as part of the process. She attended the Response Classroom training several years ago and sees the student voice piece fitting nicely into the morning meetings and student academic choice components. She plans to do a session for her school council and PTO executive committee on LODS and the AED agenda. She shared that the two Statesboro Herald focus articles on Stilson this year centered on the work they are doing on the AED agenda.

LODS Membership Stephanie Kenney and Dianne Bath shared the development of a challenge between the Eastern Region and the national level in LODS. Some members of the Eastern Region have made a proposal to withdraw from the LODS and form a new group with a possible title Democratic Schools Network and have invited GSU partners to join them. Stephanie and Dianne thought this was a decision that needed to be brought to the group for a decision to be made. Much discussion went on around why this is occurring and whether or not we wanted to leave the present structure or not and what that would mean if we did or did not. The group felt strongly about the following points:

- Being able to continue the work with the present focus.
- The opportunity to network and learn from others is important.
- Being able to invite additional members to expand the group.
- Is there a need to form a new group or associate with another existing group?
- Dues are hard to come by and wanted it considered in the decision making process.
- Would like to make sure the problem cannot be fixed before making such a decision to break from LODS.

The group decided that they were not ready at this time to make the decision to break away from LODS. Stephanie and Dianne would communicate this to Tom Poetter. A better decision might be able to be made after the NNER Conference in October where there might be a clearer vision about how the University of Washington Bothell's Goodlad Center for Educational Inquiry might play a role. It was decided that one action might be to withhold the national dues to LODS in the fall until after the NNER Conference and further discussion of what direction the Georgia Southern contingent might like to pursue. In the mean time, Dianne will research the other viable groups such as First Amendment Schools to see what they offer. Barbara mentioned that Auburn has a Truman Institute where they support schools in democracy centered work and might affiliate with a national group. Dianne will check on this as well.

Meeting time was discussed for next year. The challenge is getting a time that is good for school, community and university folks. It was decided that we would try a 7:00-8:00 a.m. coffee time for our first meeting in the fall and see if this will work.