

MORE WAYS TO CONNECT THROUGH NSDC

Explore two interactive tools that connect NSDC members to each other and to compelling voices and ideas. Online networks echo three of NSDC's core beliefs:

- Student learning increases when educators reflect on professional practice and student progress.

- Schools' most complex problems are best solved by educators collaborating and learning together.
 - Professional learning decisions are strengthened by diversity.
- We encourage all members to participate in NSDC's networks. With your expertise and the power of dialog and collaboration, NSDC's networks can truly become communities of practice.



FACEBOOK

NSDC has created a Facebook page for members, fans, and the education community. When you become a fan, you'll see NSDC's latest blog postings, get our take on news and issues affecting teachers and schools, and stay up-to-date on our latest announcements. You'll also be able to connect quickly with other members of the NSDC community. Anyone can create a free Facebook account. In an ongoing effort to reach educators where they're already gathering, NSDC will take advantage of Facebook and other convenient Web 2.0 tools that provide value to members and share our message to a larger audience.

Become a fan today — visit www.nsdc.org for a link or find us through Facebook.



Find the latest blog posts on www.nsdc.org.

NSDC BLOG

Add your voice to the blogosphere! Respond to such writers as Stephanie Hirsh, Hayes Mizell, and Jim Knight as they bring to light immediate challenges and address ongoing questions in school improvement. NSDC's blog offers opportunities to consider school-based issues as well as policy topics.

powerful WORDS

A goal without a plan
is just a wish.
— Antoine de Saint-Exupery



FROM NSDC'S BLOG

FROM JOELLEN KILLION: **Coaches' impact directly tied to planning**



The addition of coaches to a school staff has the potential for powerful transformation of teaching and student learning, but only if they're utilized properly.



FROM M. RENÉ ISLAS: **Drive reform or save jobs? New DoE document outlines priorities**

Yesterday, the Department of Education released a guidance document calling for bold new education reforms. Will it be enough to influence how states and districts use their ARRA money?

FROM JIM KNIGHT: **Where does the time go? Six steps to more effective time management**



Few things are more important than how we manage our time. If we choose our actions intentionally and focus our energy on what really counts, truly we will live more meaningful days. Educators, with so many competing demands on their time, especially understand the need to manage time effectively.

Conduct equity audits with latest book club selection

NSDC members who have added the NSDC Book Club to their membership package will receive *Using Equity Audits to Create Equitable and Excellent Schools* by Lynda Skrla, Kathryn Bell-McKenzie, and James Joseph Scheurich.

Written by well-known experts in the areas of equity and achievement, this book expands school leaders' understanding of how to interpret data in order to make equity audits work and provides practical strategies for using this

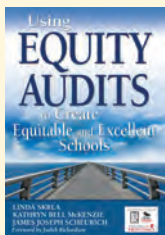
school assessment approach to help ensure a high-quality education

for all students, regardless of socioeconomic class.

Grounded solidly in theory, this book demonstrates how audits can help not only in developing fair programs that provide all students with the opportunity to reach their potential but also for hiring, training, and retaining good teachers.

Through a partnership with Corwin Press, NSDC members can add the Book Club to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for only \$49 annually.

To receive *Using Equity Audits to Create Equitable and Excellent Schools*, you must add the NSDC Book Club to your membership before July 15. The book will be mailed to NSDC Book Club members in July. For more information about this or any membership package, call NSDC at 800-727-7288 or e-mail NSDCoffice@nsdc.org.



on board / CHARLES MASON

HARD TIMES CALL FOR BEST PRACTICE

In “How to Manage Your Business in a Recession” in the January 2009 issue of *Fortune* magazine, Geoff Colvin observed, “For virtually all companies, a critical part of the core is the continual development of employees. Yet it’s remarkable how many businesses cut training and development in a downturn. The best never do.”

Those of us in education can translate Colvin’s contention to, “It’s discouraging how many school systems cut professional development in a downturn. The best never do.”

School systems across the country are struggling to balance budgets, often with professional development being among the first things to go. When times are tough and everything is on the table for scrutiny, we have an opening to take the following steps.

1. Advocate for professional learning as an indispensable part of our business. What school system does not claim to have improved student learning as its highest priority? If that is true, why cut funding for something that, when done right, clearly improves student learning? With the release of NSDC’s report, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession*, the research base for the link between professional learning and student learning is clearer than ever before. The first key finding in the report states, “Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to student achievement gains.” Share this persuasive study with principals, superintendents, board members, and community members.

2. Advocate for best practice. If we are going to argue that professional development is critical, then we better be certain that we are supporting practice that affects student learning. Again, the new study is invaluable, laying out the characteristics of effective professional learning as “intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; is connected to other school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers.” Let’s be sure we are advocating for what really works.

3. Abandon bad practice. We can be both responsible and persuasive when we willingly redirect funds that are being spent on demonstrably ineffective activities such as back-to-school motivational speakers, one-shot workshops without follow-up, and teacher grants that have no common focus. We know what works. Let’s quit supporting things that don’t.

4. Capitalize on federal stimulus funds. As policy makers and system leaders make decisions in our states and school systems on the use of federal stimulus funds, let’s be sure we understand the ways in which those funds can be targeted for professional development, and design effective, persuasive proposals that can result in new funding for the development of our employees.

Will your district follow the conventional wisdom and cut professional learning in hard times? Or will you be one of the best who never do? ■



Charles Mason is president of the National Staff Development Council.

NSDC FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2009 AWARD RECIPIENTS

NSDC's foundation, Impacting the Future Now, has awarded more than \$17,000 in monetary and in-kind donations to support participation in NSDC's premier learning opportunities. In evaluating applications, the foundation emphasizes the importance of assisting high-needs schools. The award categories and recipients for 2009 are:

CHIDLEY SCHOLARSHIPS: The Childley Scholarships provide funding to support participation in NSDC's Academy for Staff Developers. This year, the foundation awarded three Childley Scholarships.

Takisha Weatherall-Jones is the professional development coordinator for Milwaukee Public Schools. She will use her Academy experience to develop a comprehensive professional development plan for the district.

Ann Barysh is a social studies/history curriculum coach at the middle and high schools in Randolph (Mass.) Public Schools. Barysh will use her experience in the Academy to engage teachers in ongoing collaboration, professional feedback, and data use, establishing high expectations for student success.

A. Clifton Myles is the coordinator of professional development for DeKalb County Schools in Georgia. He intends to establish a framework for a three-year program of study built around a theory of change, using professional learning community to lead the transformation.

E6 GRANT: The E6 Grant supports a team's efforts to advance NSDC's purpose. The grant awards up to \$5,000 and the registration fee for the three-day NSDC

Annual Conference for three members of the project team.

This year's E6 Grant is awarded to **Jordan-Elbridge High School** in Jordan, N.Y. The project will provide professional learning for teachers to develop curriculum for 21st-century courses, particularly for those students who will move directly into the workforce in the local community.

The foundation's support to last year's Bridge Builder multiyear award winner also continues. Over the past two years, the foundation's financial awards total more than \$38,000.

Impacting the Future Now is a foundation dedicated to supporting a new generation of leaders who act on their belief that continuous learning by educators is essential to improving the achievement of all students.

To make a contribution to Impacting the Future Now, visit www.nsdc.org/getinvolved/foundation.cfm.



NSDC CALENDAR

July 19-22: NSDC's 5th Summer Conference for Teacher Leaders and the Administrators Who Support Them, Boston, Mass.

July:

Registration opens for NSDC's 41st Annual Conference in St. Louis, Mo., in December 2009.



Aug. 15: Deadline for submitting manuscripts for Summer 2010 *JSD*. Theme: Using technology for professional learning. www.nsdc.org/news/jsd/themes.cfm.

September: Election for NSDC Board of Trustees

Oct. 2: Deadline for proposals to present at NSDC's 6th Summer Conference in Seattle, Wash., in July 2010.

Oct. 12: Early registration deadline for 2009 Annual Conference.

Nov. 15: Deadline for submitting manuscripts for Fall 2010 *JSD*. Theme: The new central office. www.nsdc.org/news/jsd/themes.cfm

Dec. 5-9: NSDC's 41st Annual Conference, St. Louis, Mo.



powerful WORDS

You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.

— Jon Kabat-Zinn