



# Perspectives

Newsletter of the Pennsylvania School Study Council

<http://www.ed.psu.edu/pssc>

January / February 2008

## Register Today for:

- Dr. Kai Schafft presents in February as part of the PSSC Educational Leadership Speaker Series
- Visit PSSC online at: [www.ed.psu.edu/pssc](http://www.ed.psu.edu/pssc)

## Dr. Kai Schafft Focuses on Rural Education for January Educational Leadership Lecture

The Pennsylvania School Study Council is excited to introduce Dr. Kai Schafft as this month's presenter for the Educational Leadership Lecture Series. Dr. Schafft is the director of the Penn State Center on Rural Education and Communities and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Policy Studies at Penn State. This month's speaker series titled "Improving Rural Education while Strengthening Rural Communities: The Shared Challenge," will take place on Thursday, February 21, 2008 from 4:30-8:00pm at the BLAST Intermediate Unit 17 in Canton, PA and will focus on much of Dr. Schafft's research and work with rural education.

Historically, America's rural schools have served as centers of social and cultural activity, helping to maintain local traditions and shared intergenerational identity and experience. In short, rural schools strengthen the

social bonds that help to hold rural communities together. For rural schools and communities, the relation is symbiotic: each needs the other for its continued well-being. However, in Pennsylvania, rural communities and rural schools together face significant challenges. These include poverty, economic decline, aging populations and outmigration. For rural schools community challenges are compounded by diminished state and federal support, pressure to consolidate, and high stakes testing accountability.

These changing institutional "rules of the game" increasingly lead rural school administrators to see educational improvement and community improvement as *competing and opposing priorities*, rather than *complementary and fundamentally interconnected priorities*. Join Dr. Kai Schafft, to learn about the various Rural



Dr. Kai Schafft, third presenter in the 2007-2008 Educational Leadership Lecture Series

Center initiatives supporting strong school-community connections, and engage in an open discussion about how Penn State initiatives like the Rural Center might better partner with Pennsylvania's rural schools for school and community improvement.

For further registration information on this event and the PSSC Leadership Lecture Series please contact Angela Tzilkowski at [acr131@psu.edu](mailto:acr131@psu.edu) or 814-865-0321.

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## Executive Director's Perspective

By the time this editorial is published, nearly a year will have passed since Jillian Reese and I took the reins as directors of the Pennsylvania School Study Council. It has been an interesting year with many changes including: altered governance structures, new partners, new sources of operational funding, and new programming. There have also been some significant challenges –notably a decline in memberships, and new regulations from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, effective January 2008, that will affect our professional development programming.

Many of you will be aware of the new laws for Act 48 continuing education credits that will go into effect on January 1, 2008. In simple terms, all professional development activities for school, IU and ATVS administrators must align with the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Standards. The new law will have a significant impact on all delivery agents, including the PSSC, of Act 48 professional development opportunities for administrators. While the specific criteria for approved Act 48 programs is currently being developed (see summary of regulation changes in this issue), it is not too soon to determine that there will be



*2007-2008 Executive Director,  
Dr. Paul Begley*

### 2007-2008 Executive Committee

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considerable restrictions on the types of programs that will be approved for Act 48 credits. Most likely, many of our current programs, including evening colloquia and single day workshops, will no longer be approved as Act 48 credit opportunities. As we wait for the final criteria to be determined by PDE, we are looking at our current calendar of events scheduled for spring 2008. It is possible that many of these events will no longer qualify for Act 48 credits. With this likelihood, we are looking for some input from our members. For example, how likely are you to attend a professional development event that does not offer Act 48 credits? Preliminary data from our members tells us that if the event is worthwhile, you will attend it whether or not it generates Act 48 credits. However, that leads us back to our perennial challenge of seeking out the specific topics that you would be more willing to sacrifice the credits for.

## Executive Director's Perspective, Continued

If so, what topics would these be?

One of the more exciting new initiatives we have been involved in this year is participation with Penn State faculty in the PDE *Learning for Student Achievement Project*. This project involves the design and development of a new cohort-based principal certification program that incorporates the *Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership* standards. An initial pilot version of the new program is scheduled to begin in late spring 2008 as Penn State University summer session offerings. With the support of our member organizations, we have been recruiting potential candidates for the new program. Jillian Reese has recently held informational sessions where we solicited input from potential participants on format and process. This input is very valuable to the design of the cohort program. We are currently finalizing the

order of the courses for the program. A final schedule should be ready early in the New Year. Anyone interested in participating in the cohort should study the further information on this program included in this issue of *Perspectives*.

Another important new partnership for the PSSC has been with the Mid-Atlantic Laboratory Extension organization which is managed within Penn State Outreach. The PSSC is in the process of becoming an active contributor to the management of this project. Beginning in January 2008, the team of six Lab Extension Specialists, who serve as the linkage between the Lab and school districts, will be PSSC contractors. PSSC has also served as a partner in the delivery of two forum sessions intended to disseminate Lab sponsored research findings.

Finally, we are please to report on a very successful school study visit event that took place in State College during late November. The PSSC hosted an international school study visit of three days duration by thirteen Ontario school administrators. Participants attended workshop sessions by Penn State faculty on one day and visited schools in State College School District on the second day. A detailed report on this school study visit is included in this issue of *Perspectives*. A reciprocal visit to the Simcoe County School District, located north of Toronto, in south central Ontario, is planned for late April. Watch for further information on this excellent opportunity in coming weeks.

Paul T. Begley  
Executive Director

### PSSC Sponsored School Visits Sparks Administrator Enthusiasm

November was an exciting month for both practitioners and researchers affiliated with the Pennsylvania School Study Council. Principals from the Simcoe County School District in Ontario, Canada ventured down to Pennsylvania for three days of informative sessions and socializing with principals from the State College School District.

The visit was orchestrated by Dr. Lindy Zaretsky of the Simcoe County School District and

Dr. Bernard Badiali and Dr. Paul Begley of Penn State.

Principals and Professors from both schools districts were pleased with the turnout and meeting of the two groups. The practitioners were enthusiastic about meeting with fellow administrators and felt that they benefited from the collaboration that took place between professionals like themselves. An unexpected and exciting result of this event was the relationships that were

built between the principals and the sharing of ideas that were taken back to both school districts.

The State College cohort will take part in a reciprocal visit in April of 2008 by traveling to Ontario as guests of the Simcoe County School District. This event will also be open to interested PSSC members. More information will be available in the coming months!



## PDE Establishes New Standards for Leadership Development

As part of our job and as a service to our members we feel it is not only important for us to work as a partner between researchers and practitioners but also to be informed and inform you about the most up to date information out there about what could affect you as an educator.

As a close contact to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) we feel that the following information is necessary to those both in Universities and in the classroom.

As of January 1, 2008, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has set forth changes to the PA Inspired Leadership (PIL) standards. The newly established standards will affect superintendent and principal preparation programs as well the students entering these programs after the effective date.

Please note the new standards listed below which will be required for all superintendent and principal preparation programs as well as approved providers of continuing education for school and district leaders:

- ◆ All programs designed to prepare school and system leaders must address the 9 leadership standards.
- ◆ All approved programs for induction must address the 3 core leadership standards.

- ◆ All approved programs for the continuing professional education of school or system leaders must address the 9 leadership standards.

*Effective  
January 1, 2008  
important changes  
will be made to the  
PA Inspired  
Leadership (PIL)  
standards.*

The three core standards are listed below:

- The knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically to create an organizational vision around personalized student success.
- An understanding of standards-based systems theory and design and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the school or system leader's job as the architect of standards-based reform in the school.
- The ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system.

The six corollary standards are listed below:

- Creating a culture of teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning.
- Managing resources for effective results.
- Collaborating, communicating, engaging and empowering others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning.
- Operating in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity.
- Advocating for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.
- Supporting professional growth of self and others through practice and inquiry.

In order to work with the new standards listed above some universities are altering preparation programs and continuing education guidelines to ensure that these standards are met and fulfilled.

To hear more about how Penn State is responding to these new guidelines continue reading or contact the Educational Leadership Program of the Department of Education Policy Studies at 814-865-1487 to get involved!

## Penn State Principal Certification Program Looking For Potential Principals for Cohort

Penn State is one of only six programs in the state of Pennsylvania to create a Leadership for Student Achievement pilot program with the goal of addressing how certification programs comply with the new standards set through PDE.



Individuals who enroll in the principal certification program will be members of a cohort, which will begin in the summer of 2008. While the Educational Leadership Program of the Dept. of Education Policy Studies has had a principal certification program for quite some time, the cohort method offers a creative way to assist practicing educators in getting their principal certification.

The idea to create the program began as a result of the new Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) standards put forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) which affects preparation programs, induction programs, and providers of continuing education for administrators. Due to the need to provide new principals with certification that is in line with these standards the Educational Leadership Program at Penn State felt that providing a cohort style program would help with the successful completion of this goal.

While many of the standards address the need for collaboration and supporting other professionals, the cohort program functions well as it is naturally set up to do just that.

The newly established principal

certification program is also the result of research that shows that cohort style training is the most effective method for preparing principals for the next step in their careers. Members of the cohort can work through the material together and feel supported by individuals from a number of experiences who are all handling similar situations.

Students of the program will work alongside a small number of principals to work through the strategically planned coursework to be offered. The courses scheduled for the cohort are the same as those in a traditional certification program, but the actual schedule is in the process of being finalized.

A benefit to the newly established Penn State program is that it gives students the freedom to maintain their professional lives while allowing them to move through the program in a condensed time frame. Individuals who join the cohort will begin their course work in the summer of 2008 and finish up in the fall of 2009. At that point the students will be asked to fulfill a 180 hour internship at a school of their choice to complete the final step of the program. The internship is also designed to allow practitioners the

freedom to work and design a time-frame with their principal that works within their schedule.

At this time the program coordinators have held a preliminary meeting with individuals who may be of interest and to inquire about what candidates might be looking for from the program. As mentioned many of the class times are set but this program is also designed for the cohort and what will work for them.

Jillian Reese, the Associate Director of the Pennsylvania School Study Council is a key organizer in this effort and is in the process of recruiting potential certification candidates to take part in the principal certification cohort.

As a joint effort with the Educational Leadership Program we are asking current administrators who are affiliated with PSSC to look recommend potential principal candidates from their schools for the program.

Students who are interested in taking part should fill out a regular application for admittance through the Educational Leadership Program of the Dept. of Education Policy Studies at Penn State, specifying interest in the principal certification cohort. For further questions or interest in the program please contact Jillian Reese at [jvr123@psu.edu](mailto:jvr123@psu.edu) or Becky Contestible at [rqc2@psu.edu](mailto:rqc2@psu.edu) or 814-865-1487.

## Spring Theatre Celebrates Heroines of Literature's Pluck at the Center for the Performing Arts

*Amy DuPain Vashaw*

Center for the Performing Arts

Encourage your students and teachers to celebrate spring by attending the Center for Performing Arts' Informances for Schools program – featuring beloved characters Anne of Green Gables and Junie B. Jones. As you've read before in these pages, the Informances for Schools series allows your students and teachers to experience the arts as a living laboratory, where the pages leap to life on stage.

The Center makes it easy to attend, by providing low-cost tickets (\$7 each) and a busing subsidy to assist with the cost of the trip. We feel that field trips are an important part of a student's educational experience, especially when their destination provides mind-expanding creative engagement for them and their teachers.

On February 11, Theatreworks USA, one of the country's most respected theatre companies for youth, presents a 90-minute musical adaptation of the popular Lucy Maude Montgomery novel, *Anne of Green Gables*. This classic tale of a spirited girl sent to live with an elderly brother and sister on a farm on Prince Edward Island, explores the power of imagination and the many definitions of what makes a family.

This play is best suited for students in third through seventh grade.

Stay tuned for information on our production on April 7, 2008 which brings Theatreworks USA's adaptation of a more contemporary literary heroine, the completely irrepressible Junie B. Jones. Based on the book series by Barbara Park, the play takes several of the books' plots and combines them for a hilarious and heartfelt hour. Stories include *Junie B., First Grader (At Last!)*, *Junie B., Boss of Lunch*, and *Junie B., One Man Band*. This production is best enjoyed by students in kindergarten through fourth

grade. Due to the overwhelming popularity of this production, a **second** performance has been added – in addition to the sold-out 10AM show, seats are still available for the performance at 12:30. Hurry before it's too late for your students to experience the joie de vivre that can only be expressed the Junie B. way!

Please consider giving your students and teachers a live performing arts experience. The teachers can use what they have seen to further their classroom teaching. The students can experience, many for the first time, the undeniable spark of creativity that can only come from live theatre!

### **Get Published!**

Submit your work to PSSC's peer refereed journal...

## **THE BEACON**

### Manuscript Requirements:

Generally, manuscripts should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length. Prospective author(s) must include a statement which indicates they agree to the submission of the manuscript, and that the manuscript has not been published, and is not under consideration for publication, in part or in substance, elsewhere.

Manuscripts should be double-spaced and leave wide margins. Manuscripts should not identify the author(s) of the work. A separate page should be included which provides the author(s)' details, including contact information (address and e-mail).

Send to Carly Ackley at [cra151@psu.edu](mailto:cra151@psu.edu)

## 2007-08 PSSC Calendar of Events

- Sept 25, 2007** Academics & Athletics Workshop  
*Presenters: Mark Sherburne, Russ Mushinsky, Todd Moss, JoAnn Shore*
- Sept 26, 2007** PSSC Lecture Series I – Surviving Leadership: The Funny Side of Educational Leadership!  
*Presenter: Dr. Charles Burford*
- Sept 27 – 29, 2007** The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Values & Leadership Conference  
Theme: Metaphors and Methodologies: The Moral Contexts of Research and Practice
- October 2, 2007** PASA/PSBA Kickoff Reception
- October 27, 2007** Ed Leadership Tailgate & PSSC Awards Ceremony
- November 1, 2007** PSSC Lecture Series II – Education Technologies  
*Presenter: Dan Berger*
- November 26-28, 2007** School Study Visit – Simcoe County School District to visit State College
- February 21, 2008** PSSC Lecture Series III – Improving Rural Education While Strengthening Rural Communities: The Shared Challenge  
*Presenter: Kai Schafft*
- April 10, 2008** PSSC Lecture Series IV – Public Relations for School Administrators  
*Presenter: Tom Bradley, Director of Public Relations, Altoona School District*
- April, 2008** Reciprocal School Study Visit to the Simcoe County School District, Ontario
- April 17, 2008** Technology Workshop  
*Presenters: TBA*





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*Serving Pennsylvania Educators since 1947*

### **The Pennsylvania School Study Council**

Founded in 1947, the Pennsylvania School Study Council (PSSC) is a partnership between Penn State University and member school districts, intermediate units, and area vocational-technical schools. PSSC is dedicated to improving public education in Pennsylvania by providing up-to-date research information, professional development activities and technical assistance that will enable its members to provide top quality educational services to students.

#### **Mission:**

**We believe that....**

- PSSC's primary function is to provide services in response to identified member needs.
  - PSSC services should be unique and have a competitive advantage.
  - PSSC services should be easily attainable, timely, effective and helpful.
  - PSSC must respond to changing circumstances with creativity and innovation.
  - PSSC must use an entrepreneurial approach to providing services to its constituency.
  - Professional integrity and responsible management of resources is essential.
  - Personal contact is an important component of services offered and delivered.
  - Integrity and collegiality must characterize relationships between PSSC, member LEA's and the University.
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