

The Western Kentucky University Writing Project

Leadership Team Minutes

January 21, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. Bartley, Yvonne
2. Cole, Cyndi
3. Darnall, Byron
4. Gaye, Foster
5. Gilstratp, Cheryl
6. Haynes, Richard
7. Honaker, Bonnie
8. Houchens, Laura
9. Jensen, Liz
10. Martin, Linda
11. Mills, Shanan
12. Nance, Ann
13. Otto, Sonya
14. Padilla, Anne
15. Skaggs, Angie

16. Hagaman, John

No updates on State Writing Program.

Needs for teachers/colleagues this year: Reflections included the following: The Writing Project must somehow grasp opportunities to promote in-state/in-house professional development, as opposed to paying high prices for professional projects. PD for administrators is a need. Byron Darnall shared the idea of calling together all Writing Project Fellows in Bowling Green to network and explore possibilities of providing PD to the district. Other counties in which this might also be done: Warren (96 Fellows); Butler (21); Allen (20); Barren (37); Grayson (19); Muhlenberg (23).

The Team decided that we as teacher leaders need to step up and join CSIP (Consolidated School Improvement Plans) committees.

Mary Fye- next **newsletter**: Focus is to be on the Leadership Team. Byron Darnall volunteered to write an article for the newsletter addressing concerns/ideas for PD. Article for newsletter on involvement of committees such as CSIP to impact writing in the curriculum. Pictures were taken and sent to Mary Fye for use in the next issue. She will be requesting information from each Team member.

Next Leadership Team Meeting is Saturday, September 9, 2006 at 9 am in Cherry Hall.

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Subgroup reports:

20th Year Celebration: (Gaye F., Shanan M.) “A Sentimental Journey” Weekend- drink, food, entertainment, lapel pins, book- grand total = \$80, but amount to vary depending on which of the following options people select (Friday \$25; Saturday \$35; Book \$20) . Possible slide show and open microphone. Highlight leadership through the years of the Project. Must sign up by April 24. After this, open to non-project participants. Postcards sent with details/early invite. Formal invitation for Fellows for Friday night. It is

important for Leadership Team to invite those in own schools/districts to promote the celebration.

Advanced Institute 2006: (Ann N.) SHARING GROWTH, CELEBRATING CHANGE, BUILDING LEADERSHIP based on writing needs and writing changes for the new biennium and their impact on teacher leaders. A week of information and sharing for 15 teachers and 3 co-directors, including such topics as literacy, teacher inquiry, and ourselves as writers. Applications and best practice for OD, OR, Writing Portfolio, building teacher inquiry groups for looking at student work, etc. Participants will learn more about how to impact teaching and learning by taking leadership roles through school improvement plans. Institute to be led by a team of elementary, middle and high school teachers. Those interested in leading will make application.

Promoting NCTE/LA: (Liz J.) Promote participation in NWP and NCTE/LA by offering stipend for conference fee, travel, etc. targeting those who want to put into practice what they learn about the classroom and teacher leadership. Indication of partial financial support by the applicant's school is required to earn stipend and teachers agree to return and share in schools (staff meeting, team planning, PD, etc.).

Interest groups for our teachers: (Cheryl G.) Linda M., Angie S., Yvonne B. Interest for a professional writing and/or reading group. Suggest survey to find whether interest leans toward reading or writing. Cheryl, Linda, Angie, and Yvonne will send John the survey so he can send it out to teachers.

Outreach workshops: (Laura H.) Byron Darnall Possible long term PD, rather than one time. Ideas- ELL workshops; infuse writing in active boards; closing the gender achievement gap (summer); idea--fellows attend free if they bring someone from their building who pays the registration fee

{Visit team member website- www.laurahouchens.com for PD ideas}

Political action to protect writing portfolio: (Richard H.) Sonya O., Byron D. Propose finding our own position as the Western KY Writing Project before approaching the political arena. Form an action group? Invite local politicians in to hear students, teachers, fellows testify to the positive impact of writing portfolios. The idea of the writing portfolio is a good one, but the implementation of

it is flawed. For example, teachers and students are told that writing that is done for a class, for a teacher, and for a grade, does not score well in the portfolio. (We especially have this problem with the transactive writing piece.) Yet EVERY piece in the portfolio MUST be done in a class. That's a bit of a contradiction, yes? Why is this? There should be complete student choice.

Richard, Sonya, Bryon, and Anne feel that if students were given a choice of maybe 5 genres, (Analytical, Creative, Narrative, Expository, and Transactive) and then required to submit their 3 best pieces of writing that represent at least 2 of these genres, that it would be a more authentic representation of their writing ability. These pieces should not have to originate in class--rather from wherever the student chooses--for many times a student's best writing is not that which is done in or for a class.

Perhaps it is a good idea to eliminate the portfolio for elementary schools, or at least revamp its requirements completely. At the elementary stage students are not equipped with the knowledge to compose multi-paragraph compositions; they are learning how to construct sentences and single paragraphs. The genres and choices mentioned above could be kept, but the students would submit only a paragraph??? Thoughts?

Richard, Sonya, Byron,,and Anne agree that on-demand writing should be kept as a part of the state's accountability testing, for this is required on college entrance exams, LSAT exams, for job interviews, etc. However, the portfolio is also extremely beneficial for students because when they submit proposals, cover letters, etc., these writings are REVISED over and over before they are submitted. Therefore portfolio writing IS REAL-WORLD writing. (Any politician who has ever composed a bill has certainly revised it a number of times before submission.)

Need for an evaluation study for NWP: Ann N. will contact Deborah Martin and Donna Vincent;

Liz J. will contact Denise Henry.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30. Next meeting on September 9, 2006, 9 am, Cherry Hall.

Secretaries pro temp: Ann Nance and Byron Darnall