

Touchstone

*Newsletter of the Basic School Eastern Consortia
Housed at Virginia Tech, Falls Church, Virginia*



EASTERN CONSORTIA STAFF

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- Ms. Pat Broderick
Senior Advisor
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- Kim Dockery
- Kathy Elling
- Barbara Syrett
- John Quattrocchi
- Joy Warner

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A Message from the Director

As we begin a new year, it is a time to reflect on where we are and what we might do differently. It is also a time when we are filled with the joy of the holidays, spending time with family and friends. The Basic School Network is our “family.” We are all like-minded educators who have a common similar belief in the value of a Basic School education as outlined by Boyer. It is an education that is more than just tests and assessments. Be sure to read this month’s feature article by Ray Van Dyke on the value of a “comprehensive” elementary education. It is most timely.

Inside this edition we also continue to list grant opportunities, highlighting one for our “unsung heroes.” Our Basic School Network “family” is blessed with many “unsung heroes” who have set the foundation for the organization and keep it going. They give their expertise and much of their time gratis. They are “unsung” because a lot of what they do never gets publicized. Let me now applaud some of these heroes!

- *Mary Ellen Bafumo* whose inspiration got us all going
- *Ray Van Dyke* and *Steve Parson* (now with NCEA) whose leadership kept us moving forward after Mary Ellen

- *Pat Broderick*, editor at K-8 Teaching Magazine, who so magically provides us with authors and keynote speakers for our Summer Institute
- *Our Stakeholders’ Board* (*Patrick Callaghan, Kim Dockery, Kathy Elling, Barbara Syrett, John Quattrocchi, Joy Warner, and Janet Williams*) who provide guidance and keep us all energized
- *Virginia Tech School of Education* (*Sue Magliaro, John Burton, Vickie Martin, and Rosary Lalik*) who adopted us and provide much needed support
- *All our Teachers, Principals, and School Staff Members*, who go above and beyond to make our schools Basic Schools

Join me now in saluting our “unsung heroes” and wishing them all a very happy Basic School new year!

By Judith Smith

SAVE THIS DATE!

**Summer Institute 2006
July 28-30, 2006**

**Crystal City Marriott
Arlington, VA**

Thinking Beyond Simple Accountability: The Priorities of a Comprehensive Elementary Education

By Ray Van Dyke

“The Basic School Framework supports schools committed to creating professional learning communities ready to serve the whole child.” -Ernest Boyer, 1995

Those of us involved in Basic Schools find ourselves often reflecting on the state and strength of our beliefs in this era of high-stakes testing and accountability.

Recently I have run across several articles that address the concern of focusing so entirely on test scores and accountability that we forget our ultimate goal of educating the whole child. One such article said, “Expectations for our schools and ourselves include higher test scores for students. Yet, they include much more. To meet these expectations, we have to care about the bigger things: the self-discipline, the motivation, the initiative, the perseverance, the focus that, as parents and teachers, we must help instill in our children” (Rich). Of course, I immediately thought of our work in Basic School as I read this article.

Anyone involved in Basic Schools should definitely read “What Would Ernie Boyer Say?” an article that appeared in Education Week. Boyer’s son, Paul, ponders how his father would feel about the current state of American education. Specifically about testing, he thinks his father would be alarmed at the emphasis on testing because he believed that testing was the first step that would “spur creativity and innovation within schools, leading to more community engagement and, especially, a more integrated curriculum.” Paul Boyer goes on to say, “When testing comes to *define* excellence,

rather than be a path *toward* excellence, it no longer serves the role my father envisioned. It prevents what he ultimately hoped to achieve” (P. Boyer).

The September, 2005, edition of Educational Leadership focused on “The Whole Child.” A number of articles in this journal addressed issues such as student health, multicultural education, diversity, character education, and parent involvement. Again, we all see these topics as major components of what we do each day.

One article of particular interest was “What Does It Mean to Educate the Whole Child?” by Nel Noddings. Victor Herrera, Director of the San Antonio Regional Center, pulled together the following correlation between quotations from Noddings’ article and quotations from Boyer’s The Basic School:

NODDINGS: *Surely, we should demand more from our schools than to educate people to be proficient in reading and mathematics.*

BOYER: *To be truly educated a student must also make connections across the disciplines, discover ways to integrate the separate subjects, and ultimately relate what they learn to life.*

NODDINGS: *NEA listed seven aims of education in its 1918 report, CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: health,*

command of the fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character.

BOYER: *Core commonalities are eight integrative themes; universal experiences that are shared by all people: The life cycle, the use of symbols, membership in groups, a sense of time and space, response to the aesthetic, connections to nature, producing and consuming, and living with purpose.*

NODDINGS (quoting Shipler): *The massive human problems of society demand holistic treatment. For example, leading medical clinics are now working with lawyers and social workers to improve housing for children and to ensure early childhood learning.*

BOYER: *The Basic School is committed to serving the whole child, acknowledging that a student’s physical, social, and emotional well-being also relates to learning. Beyond a solid academic program, the school provides basic health and counseling services, and referrals for families.*

NODDINGS (quoting Soder, Goodlad, McMannon): *A Democratic society wants graduates who exhibit sound character, have a social conscience, think critically, are willing to make commitments, and are aware of global problems.*

BOYER: *The Basic School is concerned with the ethical and moral dimensions of a child’s life... upon leaving school they will have devel-*

oped a keen sense of personal and civic responsibility. Core virtues such as respect, compassion and perseverance are emphasized to guide the Basic School as it promotes excellence in living, as well as learning. Will what students learn touch their deeper selves and help them not only become knowledgeable, but socially and ethically responsible as well?



NODDINGS: *When a math teacher recites a poem or reads a biographical piece or a science fiction story, when she points to the beauty of a particular result, when she pauses to discuss the social nature of scientific work, students may begin to see connections—to see a whole person at work.*

BOYER: *Simply stated, the curriculum of the Basic School helps students make connections, integrate knowledge, and relate the lessons of the classroom to their own lives.*



NODDINGS: *Almost certainly, the sense of community and trust in our schools has declined ...we must allow teachers and students to interact as whole persons, and we must develop policies that treat the school as a whole community.*

BOYER: *The school is a place where everyone comes together to promote learning. Every classroom is itself a community. But in the Basic School, the separate classrooms are connected by a sense of purpose, in a climate that is communicative, just, disciplined, and caring, with occasions for celebration.*

Though the articles on standards/accountability/accreditation still abound in our daily reading, it is refreshing to read that there are still folks out there who spend their days and their lives focusing on teaching

the whole child. We see the importance of this charge everyday in our work with Basic School. We know that the findings of Dr. Boyer are universal. We need to continue to share our work with others.

Sources:

Dorothy Rich, "School worries: Sweat the big stuff," Roanoke Times, 11-27-05, Horizon p. 4.

Paul Boyer, "What Would Ernie Boyer Say?", Education Week, 8-31-05, p. 2.

Nel Noddings, "What Does It Mean to Educate the Whole Child?", Educational Leadership, September, 2005, pp.8-13.

Ernest Boyer, The Basic School: A Community for Learning, Jossey-Bass, 1995.

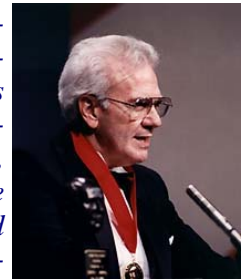
By Ray Van Dyke

Ran Van Dyke is principal of Kipps Elementary School in Blacksburg, VA and Associate Director of the Basic School Network Eastern Consortia. He is a regular workshop presenter and speaker at the Basic School Summer Institute and is a member of the Basic School Practitioners' Board at the Boyer Center.



Ernest Boyer On Neighborhoods

Beyond television, which impacts the child's life and penetrates the home, children are also influenced by the neighborhoods that surround them—by the environment they encounter on the street. . . In recent years we have built cities that are more concerned about cars than kids. . . We have built dazzling shopping centers and high speed highways, but somehow we have forgotten about the children.



-Boyer (1993)

Grants

We continue to highlight grant opportunities for our schools. Here is a recent advertisement.

Unsung Heroes Awards Program

The ING Unsung Heroes awards program recognizes innovative and progressive thinking in education through monetary awards. Eligible are teachers, principals, paraprofessionals or classified staff members with effective projects that improve student learning at an accredited K-12 public or private school. Deadline: May 1, 2006

<http://www.ing.com/us/aboutING/communityconnections/ineducation/unsungheroes/001137.html>

BASIC SCHOOL EASTERN CONSORTIA MEMBERSHIP 2005-06
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CONSORTIA STAFF

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Dr. Judith Smith
Director

Regular School Membership \$179.00
Includes

Dr. Ray Van Dyke
Associate Director

Newsletter: Five issues featuring member schools and their best practices, updates on the 13th annual Summer Institute, messages from the Director

Ms. Janet Williams
Director of Field Operations

Certificate of Membership and Member Listing Directory

Ms. Pat Broderick
Senior Advisor

Comprehensive School Membership \$795.00
\$895.00 Value - Includes all of the above PLUS

Dr. Mary Ellen Bafumo
Senior Advisor

Registration for Four People for the Fall Basic School Workshop in North Carolina

Individual Membership. \$79.00
**Designed for University/Central Office Personnel
Includes Newsletter and Workshop Information**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
BASIC SCHOOL EASTERN CONSORTIA 2005-2006**

_____ OR _____
School Individual

Street Address City/State Zip Code

Principal Telephone FAX

Contact Person Telephone Email

Type of Membership:
Regular School (\$179.00) _____
Comprehensive School (\$795.00) _____
Individual (\$79.00) _____

Mail application and check payable to:
VA Tech Basic School Network
Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center
7054 Haycock Rd., Falls Church, VA 22043



Basic School Eastern Consortia

Basic School Eastern Consortia :
Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center
7054 Haycock Road
Falls Church, VA 22043

Phone: 703-538-8492
Fax: 538-8485
Email: jusmith8@vt.edu

"Educating students to their full potential . . ."

Calling All Proposals!

The 13th Annual Eastern Consortia Summer Institute

**Marriott Crystal City
Arlington, VA**

July 28-30, 2006

Theme:
Differentiating for Diverse Learners

The Basic School Eastern Consortia has a long tradition of outstanding learning experiences. We need YOU to help make this so! Please consider submitting a proposal for a workshop presentation. Deadline for proposals is **March 1.**

Contact the Virginia Tech Basic School Office for an application:

703-538-8492
jusmith8@vt.edu

Thank You School Renewals

We thank the following schools for their prompt membership renewal in the Eastern Consortia.

If your school name does not appear below, be sure to send in your dues to the Eastern Consortia in order to receive the monthly newsletter and Summer Institute information.

- Alton Darby
- Berryhill
- Capshaw
- Children's Community
- Christiansburg
- Colegio Americano de Puebla
- Cornerstone Learning Community
- David Cox Road
- F.M. Kearns Primary
- Hoffman Trails
- Kipps
- Lake Seneca
- Lincoln
- Longfellow
- Mantua
- Monterey
- Morgan
- North Hamilton County
- P.S. 7
- PS 43
- P.S. 225
- P.S. 253
- Price's Fork
- Skyview
- South Side
- St. Lucie
- Summit Charter
- Westlawn

Thank you individual members: Patrick Callaghan
Steve Parson