IALS Conference 2012

Sharpening the Aim

Targeting Approaches in Research, Teacher Education, & Assessment Culture in Laboratory Schools

Tallahassee, Florida

Florida State University Schools
At The Florida State University

March 28-30, 2012

Follow this link for the conference site
http://www.fsus.fsu.edu/ials2012

Call for Proposals

Presentation proposals are being accepted through January 13, 2012.

Go to:
http://www.fsus.fsu.edu/ials2012/proposals.html
From The Executive Director

Dear Director, Principal, Headmaster, Superintendent...

Greetings to each of you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Laboratory Schools. As you see on our letterhead, we have had a name change. On September 28th of this year and after very careful and thoughtful deliberation, the Board of Directors voted to change the fifty plus year old name of “NALS”. We decided that the name “IALS” is both inclusive of schools across the world and of all the varied types of “laboratory schools”, including campus schools, child study institutes, research and development schools, charter schools, independent affiliated schools, professional development schools, etc. Regardless of the specific type of laboratory school, we all engage in at least some of the practices of teacher training, curriculum innovation, collaboration on research, professional development, etc. We all aim to “support member schools and serve as a voice speaking for the improvement of learning for all children.” IALS is the primary professional organization globally that works with schools such as yours.

In addition to the announcement above, a praise worthy and well organized conference is just a few months away at Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida from March 28-30, 2012. You may want to mark your calendar and go to the http://www.fsus.fsu.edu/ials2012/ web site for more information.

A very new eJournal has been produced and is now available for our members on our website www.laboratoryschools.org. Our eNewsletter is sent directly to the member school leaders and is also available on our website. So yes, we’ve been busy.

In closing, if you have not yet renewed your membership, please send complete the process soon, so that these benefits can continue for you, your faculty and staff. Simply go our website, www.laboratoryschools.org, and click on Membership, Join Now and you can pay with a credit card or PayPal. We thank you for your continued membership and support.

Sincerely,

Patricia E. Diebold

IALS Executive Director

Dedicated to Service, Research and Educational Excellence
School News

Howard Gardner School Receives a PA Charter

The Howard Gardner School for Discovery has been granted a charter by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The process of applying to become a charter school is not for the faint of heart. The documentation required to fulfill the requirements of the original application easily runs beyond 1000 pages. Some may question why a private school like ours would want to venture into this educational minefield—one filled with regulations and expectations that sometimes seem counter to the mission and philosophy of most laboratory and university affiliated schools. Our rejoinder is simple: if we as lab schools want to truly contribute to the national discussion now going on within the field of education, we have to become players. In Pennsylvania, that means becoming a public school and walking the walk.

A common complaint about the work that we all do has always been that lab schools do it in a selective environment. We pick our students. Our parents are committed and involved. We dictate our parameters of size, location, assessment practice, and hiring. In short, we cherry pick. Under Pennsylvania's Charter School Law, charters have a bit of relief from some regulations, but academically and in terms of state assessment, charters have the same responsibilities as their public partners. The application for becoming a charter school requires that all standards be addressed in the curriculum, that a curriculum guide is provided as evidence of the school's planning and practice of providing a standards-aligned educational program. Charter schools must also participate fully in the state assessment program and be held accountable for annual yearly progress of its students. Because the Gardner School focuses on assessment, we felt that this was the least of what we could be held accountable.

Under PA charter law, the four basic criteria for charter applicants include:

1. Demonstrate sustainable support.
2. Display capability, in terms of support and planning.
3. Provide all components prescribed in the Charter School Law, Section 1719-A.
4. Demonstrate how the high quality charter school will serve as a model for other public schools.

A cursory look at the criteria other than #3 would suggest that laboratory schools are inherently candidates for a charter, at least in Pennsylvania. Further, the requirement that the school be a model for other public schools indicates the purpose of charters is to provide alternative options that are innovative and not derivative in nature, precluding the redundant and largely inept attempts of the past to define reform in terms of “back to basics.” This is clearly a call for progressive education, which has always been at the core of the laboratory movement. In short, we are back!

At least that is the way we have interpreted our charge as Pennsylvania’s newest charter school. It is our hope that by melding the more progressive, research driven elements of laboratory schools with the more tolerant regulatory control of charters, lab schools and our university affiliated brethren will take a rightful and more meaningful role in educational reform.
School News

From GBLUES:
Our Director, Becky Overholt is having treatment at Johns Hopkins Hospital. She is staying with her son during treatment. If you'd like to send her a card, please forward to Lisa Cline at GBLUES, 1871 Old Main Drive, Shippensburg, PA 17257.

Also, GBLUES experienced a flood recently in the building, due to a toilet breaking in the 1st Grade bathroom. We had water in the K, 1 & 2 classrooms, and it took 2 days to clean up. We lost supplies during the flood, and had to apply for a waiver, which was approved for the 2 days of missing school. Due to the quick actions of the staff and teachers, damage was minimized.

KEEPING CONNECTED

Announcing the Florida Charter School Alliance

About the Alliance

As the unified voice of the public charter school movement in Florida, the Florida Charter School Alliance was formed to ensure that every family in the state has access to the high-quality public school of their choice. We are a 501 (c) (3), nonprofit, non-partisan organization.

The Alliance was initially formed in May 2011. And even though we are only a few months old, our work has gotten off to a great beginning. Major legislation was passed this year that supports the growth of high quality charter schools throughout Florida, but, there is still more work that needs to be done with regard to providing increased autonomy, funding equity and accountability for charter schools. The Alliance will be an organization at the forefront in helping to make these legislative changes happen.

Visit the website at:

http://www.flcharteralliance.org
International Connections

Carnegie Mellon Children’s School Professional Development in South Korea

In January, 2012, we will host a brief visit by Duksung’s Early Childhood Department Chair, lab school Director, and six teachers. These educators will observe at the Children’s School and the Cyert Center at Carnegie Mellon, the Falk School at the University of Pittsburgh, and the Carlow University Campus School, as well as dialogue with the administrators and cooperating teachers who will be working with Duksung’s practicum students several weeks later. The students will observe and assist in early childhood classrooms at either our school, Falk or Carlow, as well as attend a university class, participate in workshops specially planned for them, and visit some Pittsburgh cultural attractions geared for young children.

In October of 2011, three Children’s School educators were privileged to learn about culture and education in South Korea and to share our early childhood experience with children, parents, pre-service teachers and experienced educators there. We hope these reflections and photographs will give you a glimpse into this amazing professional development experience.

Throughout the years, many families of our Korean students have extended an invitation to "come and visit Korea"! I was so fortunate to actually do that in October. Not only was South Korea a beautiful country steeped in history and culture, but the people were warm and inviting. We could not have had a better experience. Our hosts saw to our every need, providing great accommodations, excellent food and interesting conversation. I enjoyed seeing our former practicum students and meeting new friends. The faculty, students, parents and children at Duksung Women’s University were amazing. The environment and energy of the school was very much like walking into the Children’s School. And, of course, children are children no matter where you are in the world. We shared many smiles and giggles! Choosing one highlight of the trip is difficult but spending time with a Children's School alumni, Minjune, and the Kim family was one of the best. At the Children's School, we really are a "family" that cannot be separated over time or distance!

Donna Perovich
Korea Connections  Submitted by Sharon Carver

The theme that emerged for me during our visit to Duksung Women’s University in Seoul was CONNECTIONS. I was deeply touched by reconnecting with one of my graduate students from my University of Rochester days; Dr. Myunghee Kang is now a professor of education at Duksung and she graciously hosted all of us in her home for 5 days. Building new connections with Dr. Eunsoo Shin (my counterpart at Duksung) and Mrs. Geum-Gu Lee (the Vice Director) was a joy and an inspiration for future collaboration. The professional challenge of the trip for me was preparing meaningful presentations for audiences of lab school parents, pre-service teachers, and early childhood professionals from all over South Korea. Balancing the universal messages of professional engagement, particularly with other laboratory school colleagues, with the unique aspects of the Children’s School approach and then connecting the ideas to the Korean context was well received by all. The professional highlight was observing two of our amazing educators, Mrs. Bird and Mrs. Perovich, share their expertise, from introducing undergraduates to the inquiry process (with bubbles in the photos below) and then demonstrating the practice with children, to communicating with other professionals in a spirit of openness and cultural sensitivity to minimize the language barrier and respect the hierarchical system. I was honored to represent the Children’s School, Carnegie Mellon University, and the International Association of Laboratory Schools as part of this delegation and I look forward to future connections between the Children’s School and Duksung educators, families, and children!

Ten Days, Ten Thoughts:

Reflections on My First Trip to South Korea  Submitted by Jean Bird

Day 1 plus some: The mixture of exhaustion and excitement that comes with travel settled in quickly as I flew forward in time and into another culture. Not knowing what to expect, I surprised myself by really enjoying the first three of many delicious Korean meals. Yes, mom, I tried everything at least once! The steady stream of wonderfully gracious hosts from Duksung Women’s University who transported, housed, fed, organized, and cared for me from this Day 1 were no surprise at all.

Day 2: From the quiet solitude of an ancient shrine and palace, to the history-filled walk by a city stream, to the crushing crowd of the marketplace, I experienced a brief, yet perfect, immersion into the enormous and beautiful city of Seoul. The day ended with an overnight stay in a luxury, traditional Korean Guest House. The heated floor made it an extra-special cozy night.

Day 3: The foreign became completely familiar when I stepped inside the Duksung Women’s University Lab School. The teachers were singing songs and challenging children with interesting games and activities. The children were building with blocks, eating snack, and playing outdoors. I know this place!
Ten Days, Ten Thoughts … continued …

Day 4: A trip to the Korean Folk Village gave me an inside, historic view of traditional Korean life. I was especially interested in the working folk art shops housed in the old, refurbished and reconstructed buildings on the expansive grounds. The biggest blessing of the day was getting to spend it with Joy and Ms. Son, two Duksung graduate students who taught at the Children’s School last February. My day was full of “Joy” and “Sun”!

Day 5: I had some trepidation over this day’s visit to the DMZ, or De-Militarized Zone, the four mile wide “line” between North and South Korea. The bus reservations had already been made so my interest in history had to overcome the fret over politics and war. I ended up experiencing a strange fusion of sadness for a separated people and hopefulness for future reunification (see us helping to reconnect the two halves of the sphere below). I will be pondering on this day for a long time.

Day 6: I wasn’t sure what I wanted to say in the lecture to the teacher education students and graduate students when I was the one experiencing so much learning on this adventure. It turned out that telling them all about a very special place called The Children’s School was a great choice. They responded with enthusiasm, and intelligent and interesting questions. I am still not positive that Tony (Dr. Byungho Lee) the Interpreter said exactly what I said. There were some times of laughter where I didn’t think I said much that was funny.

Day 7: Even though I truly appreciate the week full of amazing, first time experiences, in the classroom with the children is where I love to be. The universal language of music and the ever-present desire of young children to explore made teaching easy and gratifying. No interpretation needed!

Day 8: Connecting with teachers and administrators from many different Korean Laboratory Schools was a fitting end to a week of formal meetings and lectures. It is in these connections that the agenda of high quality and excellence in Early Childhood Education will be studied and advanced in both Korea and in the United States. Reconnecting with a former Children’s School student and his family rounded out the day beautifully.

Day 9: Shopping Day was made extremely productive and fun by way of gracious help from one of the professors at Duksung (and her nephew who came to carry the bags!!!). A final lovely and delicious Korean lunch, a scenic walk through the side streets of the city, and a needed stop in one of a zillion coffee shops was the perfect end to yet another great day.

Day 10: Time go home and time to say thank you to my family, my colleagues, my fellow travelers, and the people at Duksung. This opportunity has broadened my world-view and shaped me as a teacher. I look forward to the continuing collaboration!
IALS Opportunities

Research Mini-Grants

Applications to receive an IALS mini-grant for research are due on the first Friday in February each year. Application forms and all the necessary information are on the IALS website at http://www.laboratoryschools.org.

Over the years, many teacher/researchers have had the opportunity to take action on a research goal because of timely support from IALS. If you have a research question or a protocol for exploring practice that you have been thinking of beginning, please don't hesitate to consider an IALS grant. If you have any questions about getting started in research or about the application process, please be in touch with Elizabeth Morley, IALS Mini-Grant coordinator. We encourage you to share this information with faculty. This is an opportunity for your staff to receive funding and recognition of their research work in our member lab schools and classrooms.

Applications should be emailed to Elizabeth Morley at: elizabeth.morley@utoronto.ca

Please be in touch if you have any questions.

GRANTS AVAILABLE

Several other grants are available from IALS, including program collaboration and conference travel. Please visit the website for more information.

Opportunities

IALS JOURNAL

Our peer-reviewed, open-access Journal is published twice a year and addresses key issues facing today's laboratory and university affiliated schools. Articles offer perspectives on educational trends and include topics such as the history and future of lab schools, innovations in curricula and programs, lab school administration, and teacher education. The journal includes articles grounded in evidence-based classroom practices, action research, and theoretically based quantitative and qualitative scholarship.

The aims and scope of this journal is to foster and encourage academic discourse on topics germane to laboratory and university-affiliated schools. Best practices, educational trends, and theoretical based quantitative and qualitative scholarship found within these pages are intended to extend beyond our respective geographical contexts.

Click on the link below to access the Journal's web site at Rhode Island College's Digital Commons. You can use that site to find submission requirements and to electronically submit an article.

http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/nals/vol1/iss1/
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IALS Membership

Apply for membership in the International Association of Laboratory Schools on the website:

http://www.laboratoryschools.org