



## The Third Mile Group Fall 2008 Update

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Third Mile Group is happy to bring you this update on our projects and clients. We had a very busy summer working on and wrapping up several projects. We're doing some exciting and interesting work on education leadership and teacher preparation, as well as strategic planning, research and analysis. Please keep in mind that TMG can serve as a short-term solution to staffing and resource allocation constraints as we can operate as staff members to help launch, direct or complete scopes of work. We stand ready to work with you on new or existing projects.

### Project News

TMG partner Charles Coble continues to serve as the co-director of the Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative (SMTI) of **the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC)**. The primary goal of the initiative is to increase the number and quality of middle grades and secondary science and mathematics teachers, and 2008 has been a banner year for the initiative. NASULGC has been awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to develop a broad framework for presenting promising practices of existing and evolving science teacher programs, and to support online opportunities for teacher education programs to learn from one another. In September NASULGC and SMTI Commission members attended a conference in Palo Alto, California for the purpose of helping refine the SMTI analytic framework. The meeting was co-hosted by Stanford University and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Carnegie Foundation President Anthony S. Byrk and Stanford Ducommun Professor of Education Linda Darling-Hammond welcomed participants.

In addition, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded three grants to support the NASULGC initiative: \$200,000 for improving supply and demand data for the preparation of secondary teachers of math and science; \$200,000 to develop a new tool for analyzing the quality of recruitment, preparation, induction and development of teachers; and a RETA grant of \$1.5 million to work with a subset of NASULGC institutions on deepening their commitment and actions around improving preparation of physics and chemistry teachers.

The next meeting of the SMTI Commission will take place November 9-11 in Chicago in conjunction with the annual NASULGC conference. Mayor Richard E. Daly will open the meeting. An important agenda item before the NASULGC membership will be "the pledge" - a commitment from NASULGC institutions to drive up the numbers, quality and diversity of science and math teachers produced in NASULGC colleges and universities.

Updates of the SMTI work are posted on the NASULGC website under [Major Initiatives, SMTI](#).

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The Third Mile Group, as a subcontractor with **Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA)**, conducted an evaluation of the Ritchie Program for School Leadership. The program represents a unique partnership between Denver University (DU) and Denver Public Schools (DPS) to train principals as instructional leaders for the urban school district. The Donnell-Kay Foundation of Denver supported this evaluation to determine the success and sustainability of the program. We interviewed current students, graduates of the program who are sitting principals, mentor principals, faculty and administrators at both DU and DPS. Our final report, presented to the DPS superintendent in October, outlined the strengths of the program - a rigorous selection process, robust and relevant curriculum, strong faculty and community of practice - and offered recommendations for improving specific areas. In September, DPS received a five-year federal grant that will help support the internship and mentoring components of the Ritchie Program.

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In June, TMG began working with the **Texas High School Project** to organize and convene the Texas Educational Leadership Council (TELC). The Wallace and Gates Foundations are supporting this effort to strengthen education leadership stakeholder collaboration across the state of Texas, and identify policy levers in the system that could substantively improve the education leadership system. The TELC believes that in order to maximize the state's significant investment in teaching quality, policies and practices in leadership quality must also receive equal effort and resources from Texas policymakers and education leaders. TMG has organized and facilitated a series of meetings of the TELC design team, and also prepared an environmental scan of the leadership policies, initiatives, and players in Texas. From the environmental scan the design team produced a gap analysis that identifies the needs in K-12 education leadership policies and programs in the specific areas of recruitment, system tracking, preparation, licensure and certification, mentoring/induction/support and evaluation. At upcoming meetings the TELC will delve further into the gap analysis, commission data reports, and ultimately provide recommendations to state education leaders and policymakers.

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TMG is working with the **Legacy Foundation**, a non-profit, independent entity created by the **Colorado Department of Education**, to launch the Foundation's Legacy Scholars Program. This multipart strategic initiative aims to recruit the best and brightest minds in Colorado to serve as teachers. The strategies will include, but are not limited to: a marketing and public relations campaign around the profession of teaching; a systemic recruitment plan for getting young students interested in teaching as well as re-engaging

mid- and post-career citizens to teach; a clearinghouse of information and pathways into teaching; and engaging the business community more meaningfully in the recruitment, preparation and experience of teaching. In addition, this initiative seeks to ensure that the various well-meaning teaching reforms across the state are mutually supportive, directed toward the same education vision and clear to practitioners in districts and schools. TMG assisted in the preparation of a concept paper and has helped organize and facilitate six focus groups of key education leaders, practitioners and stakeholders to vet the plan and goals. Following a series of discussions with national experts, a draft report will be prepared that will outline the first steps for launching the program.

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The **Education Commission of the States (ECS)** has engaged TMG to assist with its teaching quality and leadership action agenda. TMG is working with ECS staff and national experts and practitioners to develop a collaborative national project that will demonstrate the fundamental connection between the quality of the teachers in the classroom and the preparedness and capability of school leaders, and translate that connection into effective educational policy and practice in the states. Through its unique role as a cross-constituency convener, ECS wants to capture the expertise, experience and the political will of the many stakeholders and collaborate with them to craft solutions and strategies that will ensure significant gains in learning as well as systemic changes in education policy and practice. As a first step, ECS and TMG are assembling a "strategy team" whose charge will be to craft the blueprint for the overall initiative and drive the implementation of activities and tasks toward clear and articulated objectives.

TMG is also helping ECS to organize a series of regional meetings for ECS Commissioners, designed to provide assistance and technical expertise to state educators and policymakers as they seek solutions to critical education issues. The first meeting - for the Midwestern and Heartland states - will take place in Kansas City, Missouri December 8-9, 2008, and is being sponsored by The Kauffman Foundation. The New England states will meet in Boston, Massachusetts January 9-10, 2009 through the generous support of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Contact Karen Kepler at ECS ([kkepler@ecs.org](mailto:kkepler@ecs.org)) or Cathy Walker at TMG ([cjwalker@thirdmilegroup.com](mailto:cjwalker@thirdmilegroup.com)) for additional information.

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Our strategic planning and fundraising work with **Fountain-Fort Carson School District Eight** in Fountain, Colorado continues in support of the Lorraine Education and Community Center. The Center houses the Lorraine Secondary School, an alternative middle and high school for at-risk students. The Center also provides an array of social services - health, mental health, temporary assistance, Head Start, YMCA - to both students and the community at large. Two small grants have been awarded this year as part of a match to a four-year \$400,000 grant award from The Daniels Fund. With support from the Daniels grant, the third term of postsecondary classes for current, former and graduated students of Lorraine is in progress. We are seeking funding to support a human resources coordinator, who will be the first point of contact for all clients at the Center.

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The Third Mile Group recently began a new project for the **Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia**. TMG will assist the state in achieving an ambitious goal of the strategic plan, which is to produce 80% of the state's need for new teachers by the year 2020. This work was begun under former Vice Chancellor Jan Kettlewell, and now continues under the leadership the new Vice Chancellor for P-16, Lynne Weisenbach.

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The **Wyoming Department of Education** hired the Third Mile Group to produce a policy brief on dropout prevention. The brief will be presented to the State Board of Education this fall to help the Board understand policy options and effective practices on decreasing the dropout rate and increasing high school completion rates. TMG conducted research on best practices around the country, provided current research on dropout and completer rates, and identified key policy levers and appropriate policy actions to be considered by the Wyoming State Board.

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The Third Mile Group is working in partnership with JM Armstrong and Associates and Targeted Leadership Consulting to develop, convene and implement ongoing professional networking and learning activities for a group of states, districts, and strategic partners that wish to engage in and maintain a **Professional Learning Community (PLC)** on key issues facing school and district leaders in the areas of data-informed decisionmaking and resource allocation. The PLC was created out of the Leadership Issue Groups, a three-year project sponsored by the Wallace Foundation and managed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The first meeting of the PLC took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico in October. The objectives of the group are to provide interested school and district leaders a venue to advance and deepen their work by collaborating with other sites working on the same issues; convene meetings and provide ongoing facilitation through an online community of practice; facilitate brokering and connectivity of the issue group participants to other experts and organizations who can provide assistance; and to coordinate or participate in writing materials and publications that track, analyze and communicate the work being conducted by participants to constituents across the country. The next PLC meeting will be in May 2009.

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The Third Mile group continues to work with **Learning Point Associates (LPA)**, most recently on producing a policy brief on the latest news in human capital resource allocation in the education sector. We also created a written summary of LPA's resources and "Tips and Tools on increasing the effectiveness of leadership quality.

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TMG partner Charles Coble has been working with the **National Commission on Teaching for America's Future (NCTAF)** in the development of two proposals that have been submitted to national foundations. The proposals seek support to advance NCTAF's work in improving teacher preparation.

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In September TMG Partner Katy Anthes and Lawrence Murray, of the **National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA)**, traveled to the San Luis Valley in Southern Colorado to visit two sites that operate the CASASTART program, CASA's research-based program of substance abuse prevention for middle school youth. The program has shown many positive outcomes for middle school students, including better grades, higher test scores and lower dropout rates. The site visits were an effort to learn how CASASTART operates successfully in rural Colorado, and they coincided with informational and community meetings in Denver to discuss ways in which CASASTART might be expanded to other areas in Colorado. TMG is continuing to help CASA develop and sustain relationships with the education sector.

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We invite you to visit our website - [www.thirdmilegroup.com](http://www.thirdmilegroup.com) - for more details on our clients and projects. We welcome your comments and questions about our work and about The Third Mile Group. We love hearing from you.

-- Katy, Charles and Cathy

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