



## The Third Mile Group

December 2010 Update

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Greetings from the Third Mile Group! We've been so busy this fall that our newsletter is coming out later than usual, but we're happy to be able to share with you updates on our projects. This year we've had lots of work with long-time clients as well as a few new ones -- all work that we enjoy.

Our very best to you for a happy and healthy holiday season.

### Project News

#### ***Colorado School Leadership Academy Board completes principal standards revision***

TMG serves as staff to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) School Leadership Academy Board, which is charged with providing a comprehensive leadership and professional development *system* that identifies, recruits, trains and inducts qualified persons for leadership positions in Colorado public schools. TMG coordinated the Board's revision of Colorado's principal standards after soliciting input from several stakeholder groups around the state. The Board will submit the revised standards, in collaboration with the State Council on Educator Effectiveness, to the State Board of Education for review and approval in early 2011. The SLA Board has now begun work in earnest on designing the structure, criteria and operating procedures of the school leadership academy. Click [here](#) for more information about coordinated efforts on improving school leadership in Colorado.

#### ***Colorado Expanded Learning Opportunities Commission launches statewide listening tour***

TMG is also providing coordination and assistance to the Expanded Learning Opportunities Commission appointed by Commissioner Dwight Jones in May 2010. Made up of 17 members who represent schools districts, foundations, state agencies, program providers and the legislature, the Commission is examining the state-level policies needed to most effectively use the school day and to foster collaboration and partnerships among teachers, schools and community partners that go beyond core subjects to fully engage and enrich all students. The outcome of

the Commission will be a report to policymakers that outlines a vision of student-centered learning that transcends the school day and location, and encourages education systems to use time, partners and technology in new ways to achieve greater long-term outcomes for students, including increased academic achievement and better preparation for college and the workforce.

With support from the Colorado Legacy Foundation, the first step in the Commission's work has been a statewide tour of Colorado to listen to educators, program providers, parents and others about the challenges and successes of expanded learning time and discuss ideas for improving programs and strengthening community partnerships. Feedback from the state meetings will inform the Commission's policy report and recommendations. More information about the ELO Commission is available on the [CDE Website](#).

***Department of Defense Grants support multiple schools and programs in FFC8***

TMG is starting Year 2 as part of the evaluation team of two grants awarded to Fountain-Fort Carson School District Eight (FFC8) from the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), which seek to improve student achievement, teacher effectiveness and school climate through specific interventions and diagnostic assessments that target the needs of military students. Our first-year reports on both grants were completed in July. We're preparing for a new round of surveys, interviews and focus groups to assess the impact and scope of the interventions.

TMG also helped the district secure a third DoDEA grant in the amount of \$798,750. *Mastering Math by Making Connections*, awarded in July, will provide to elementary school teachers comprehensive professional development and digital support in mathematics concepts and processes to improve content knowledge, instruction skills, and the effective integration of technology and 21st century skills into mathematics instruction. TMG will serve as the evaluator on this grant project as well.

TMG continues to provide planning and fundraising assistance to FFC8 on the Lorraine Secondary School and Community Center, including administrative support for the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services grant from the Colorado Department of Education, and the postsecondary education initiative supported by The Daniels Fund. District administrators, school board members and the teachers and students at the Lorraine School are hoping to set a date for groundbreaking on a new facility in 2011.

***Increasing the Quality, Quantity and Diversity of Science and Math Teachers: Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative (SMTI)***

The Association for Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) is leading the SMTI initiative, which now has 127 research universities on board. Collectively, SMTI members prepare more than 7,500 science and mathematics teachers annually, making it the largest STEM new teacher initiative in the country. TMG partner Charles Coble is co-director of SMTI with Howard Gobstein, the VP for research and science policy at APLU. The 2010 SMTI National Conference was held in Cincinnati, Ohio in June, with science and education faculty, STEM center directors, deans, provosts and other university members from over 70 institutions in attendance. SMTI staff are busy preparing for the 2011 annual conference to be held June 8-10 in Portland, Oregon.

More information about SMTI is available on the [APLU website](#).

### ***The Analytic Framework: A Tool for Advancing Change and Innovation in Science and Mathematics Teacher Preparation and Development***

The Analytic Framework (AF) is a unique and comprehensive instrument designed to be used both as a diagnostic tool for program improvement and for benchmarking against promising practices. The AF has been developed as part of SMTI by TMG partner Charles Coble and Lizanne DeStefano, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with significant contributions by Nancy Shapiro and Jennifer Frank of the University of Maryland System. An APLU Forum focused on the AF was held in Washington, DC in October. For more information on the AF, click [here](#).

### ***Science and Mathematics Teacher Preparation Expands in Georgia***

Lynne Weisenbach, Vice Chancellor for Educator Preparation and Innovation, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, has engaged TMG partner Charles Coble to advise Savannah State University and Southern Polytechnic State University on developing new teacher preparation programs. Coble also served as the external evaluator of the USG Secondary Mathematics and Science Online M.A.T. program, which is offered cooperatively by five USG institutions: Columbus State University, University of West Georgia, Kennesaw State University, Georgia Southern University and Valdosta State University. The program targets career changers who are interested in entering the teaching profession, teachers employed but without full licensure, and others who possess the prerequisite educational background in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or a related field.

### ***Online Resource Clearinghouse being developed by the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE)***

TMG partners Katy Anthes and Cathy Walker are working with the WDE on components of the Department's Fusion Portal for school improvement, assisting in the organization, resource selection and creation of vetting protocols for an online resource clearinghouse. Via focus groups and an online survey we have collected feedback from educators and administrators about the resource needs in schools and districts throughout the state. Our next step will be to design the arrangement of resource portal information, create descriptions of categories and then beta test the organization schema with school district personnel.

### ***South Dakota Board of Regents proposes new master's degree in teacher leadership***

The South Dakota Board of Regents is undertaking an initiative, with all five public universities and the active engagement of the SD Department of Instruction, to develop a new master's degree in teacher leadership. The intent of the proposed new degree is to develop the capacity of a critical core of teachers within districts and schools across the state who will have the knowledge and skills to work as teacher leaders in meeting the challenges and opportunities created by higher standards for student learning and by the increased diversification and needs of the school population in South Dakota. Chancellor Jack Warner and system Vice Chancellor of

Academic Affairs Sam Gingerich kicked off the initial planning meeting in October. Joining the university faculty and deans from the five campuses (Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern University, South Dakota State University and the University of South Dakota) were a number of teachers and principals from Stanley County. A second planning meeting was convened December 6.

The timeline for implementation is short: the statement of need, program description, course syllabi and funding model must be presented to the SDBOR in June 2011 in order to begin offering the proposed master's degree by summer 2012. TMG partner Charles Coble served as facilitator of both planning meetings and will continue to assist in moving the initiative forward, even as the state deals with more restrictive budget realities.

### ***Rural Education in Colorado***

TMG partners Katy Anthes and Cathy Walker are assisting the East Central BOCES in preparation of a report on rural education in Colorado, based on interviews with superintendents and educators in school districts throughout the state. Colorado has 178 school districts, and most are in rural areas that bring a particular set of challenges to educators and administrators. The final report will be submitted to the Colorado Department of Education in early 2011.

### ***Policy Leader Development in Colorado***

TMG partner Katy Anthes is working with the Partnership for Families and Children, the Institute for Education Leadership, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the University of Colorado at Denver School of Public Affairs, and the Education Commission of the States to re-develop the Education Policy Fellows Program in Colorado. The Colorado EPFP will be a 10-month professional development program designed to benefit individuals, organizations, and government in the state by helping emerging leaders in education and related fields acquire new perspectives and skills needed to function effectively in the increasingly complex political and changing environment of state-level education. Fundraising efforts are underway, and we hope to start the first cohort in the fall of 2011.

### ***Recently Completed Projects***

- In late summer TMG conducted an assessment of the Colorado STEM Network (CSN) to identify the next steps in its mission to build a statewide coalition of business, government, education and community groups to improve STEM education for all students. Following a number of focus groups and interviews with CSN board members, state agency personnel and government officers, TMG produced a report on the importance of CSN in the state, its successes and challenges, and recommendations for moving forward.
- TMG assisted CDE in developing the state plan for the Title V Abstinence Education Grant Program. Through a competitive grant process CDE intends to distribute nearly \$450,000 annually over the next three years to eligible program providers throughout the state as part of a comprehensive approach to

decreasing the teen birth rate in the state.

We welcome your comments and questions about our work and about The Third Mile Group. Please visit the [TMG website](#) for more details on our clients and projects.

- Katy, Charles and Cathy

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