



THIRD
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GROUP

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Fall 2007

The Third Mile Group Fall 2007 Update

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are happy to bring you this update on Third Mile Group projects and partners. Over the last few months we have continued our work with eight different clients on a variety of issues – education leadership, teacher education, science and math teacher preparation, teacher academies, community schools, and prevention programs for at-risk students.

In late June we wrapped up a project for the South Dakota Board of Regents, providing assistance and consultation on a system-wide review of teacher education programs at all five state universities. TMG partner Charles Coble delivered the final report and recommendations to the Board in Brookings, South Dakota on June 28. Recommendations include:

- Integrating mobile computing technology more completely into all preparation programs for secondary educators, as well as into a range of lower-level courses.
- Developing a common framework for all school-university partnerships and create partnership agreements with each school district in South Dakota.
- Creating recruiting initiatives to attract students into the education field, including more support for effective programs leading to teacher certification for people who have already earned a bachelor's degree.
- Developing a statewide assessment of teacher education program performance and link student unit records in the K-12 and higher education systems together.

The review singled out several programs for recognition, including the Teacher Learning Center at Black Hills State University, established in partnership with the Spearfish School District at West Elementary School; Dakota State University's use of technologies in all stages of its teacher preparation programs; and The University of South Dakota's Professional Development Center model, a unique program that mentors new teachers into the profession.

The final report is available on the SDBOR website:

<http://www.sdbor.edu/administration/academics/TeachEd/resources.htm>.

TMG conducted research and facilitated strategic planning for the National Center on Student Engagement (NCSE) as part of an internal evaluation of how best to expand work and forge partnerships with the education sector nationally. NCSE offers training and technical assistance, research and evaluation, and resources and tools to states and school districts that address the programs of at-risk youth. The Center maintains a comprehensive database of truancy reduction contacts and programs in the United States, and also is the sponsor of an accredited, professional development opportunity to address educational barriers and foster academic achievement of students experiencing homelessness and high mobility. Visit NCSE's website for more information about these projects at: <http://www.schoolengagement.org>.

TMG continues working with Fountain-Fort Carson School District Eight on strategic plans for the Lorraine Secondary School and Community School, an alternative school for middle and high school students that also offers social and health services to students and the community. The district is committed to building a new state-of-the art facility to accommodate the school and an expanded suite of services, as well as postsecondary education opportunities for the high school students and citizens of the community. The postsecondary component of the workplan is being launched through a partnership with Pikes Peak Community College, set to begin classes at Lorraine in January 2008. Under the leadership of Jim Welte, the new Center Coordinator, the service providers are collaborating to better integrate and sustain services for Lorraine students and families. TMG is working to identify funding sources for two new positions at the Center that have been created out of our strategic planning, as well as funding for ongoing operating expenses of the new facility.

We are delighted to report that the district superintendent who spearheaded this project – Dwight Jones – was named Colorado Commissioner of Education in June of this year. Commissioner Jones and the Department just released a new strategic plan, Forward Thinking: The Voice (and Future) of the Colorado Department of Education. (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/download/PDF/ForwardThinking.pdf>)

The new superintendent at FFC is long-time chief financial officer Cheryl Walker, a strong advocate for the Fountain community and for the Lorraine project.

The Third Mile Group is working with the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA) toward developing and sustaining partnerships in the education sector, particularly around the Center's flagship program initiative, CASASTART. Begun in 1992, CASASTART (Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows) is a community-based, school-centered substance abuse and violence prevention program aimed at high-risk 8-to-13-year-olds and their families and the neighborhoods in which they live. The program brings together key stakeholders in schools, law enforcement agencies, social service and health agencies, and uses intensive case management to work with youth. TMG partners participated in a strategy forum in Philadelphia in June with program practitioners from around the country. We are working to identify networks and partnerships for CASA to cultivate, and positioning CASA as a viable solution to the problems of at-risk youth faced by states and school districts.

TMG completed a first phase of work for Learning Point Associates (LPA) on education leadership – an environmental scan and assessment of research in the field culminating in a summit meeting that identified a leadership research initiative being undertaken by REL Midwest. LPA engaged TMG for two additional projects this summer. The first is the development and analysis of a survey of school district superintendents and school board chairs to determine how districts use the media – whether print, broadcast, or internet – as a conduit for effective communication. The survey is currently in the field with results expected by the end of October. TMG also conducted research and developed several briefing papers on future drivers of education in politics, the economy and demographics.

TMG has begun a second year as staff to the ongoing Leadership Issue Groups (LIG) sponsored by The Wallace Foundation and managed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The LIG project is a three-year initiative that brings together groups of education leaders from across the system to grapple with difficult education leadership issues. TMG staff continue to oversee three separate LIGs – governance, resource allocation and incentives, and data-informed decisionmaking – and integrate the work and results of each group into the larger Wallace leadership initiative. The three LIGs are working on creating resource kits for state and district leaders to help them improve districts’ data use, knowledge of governance systems and the effective allocation of resources toward school improvement.

TMG continues work on the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative (SMTI). The primary goal of the initiative is to increase the number and quality of middle grades and secondary science and mathematics teachers. TMG and NASULGC have created an analytical framework that identifies five goals of the initiative, with attendant strategies for each goal. Over the next few months working groups will build out the framework by identifying interesting and promising practices in science and mathematics teacher preparation and development for institutional leaders and faculty. TMG also will identify organizations and programs that show promise of strong collaboration on SMTI. The next meeting of the SMTI Commissioners will be held in New York City November 9-10. Updates of the SMTI work will be posted on the new NASULGC website under Science & Math: <http://www.nasulgc.org>.

TMG continues work with the National Center for Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) on the development of a Teacher Academy initiative. TMG has conducted research and analysis on the core principles and elements of programs across the country and identified state and district policies that support the development of teacher academies. TMG Partner Charles Coble chaired a panel presentation on teaching academies at NCTAF’s Annual Symposium in August in Philadelphia. TMG is assisting NCTAF in further developing the knowledge base on this new model for preparing teachers for our nation’s schools.

Third Mile Group partners were honored to introduce and accompany Roger Sampson – the new president of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) – to meetings with members of the education community in Washington, D.C. recently. Roger met with representatives of CCSO, NASULGC, NCTAF, Achieve, NCATE, AASCU, NGA, NBPTS, and NSBA, and was the guest of honor at a reception co-sponsored by TMG, Learning Point Associates and NASULGC. The TMG partners met and worked together at ECS, so we were pleased to have this opportunity to show our continuing support and commitment to ECS’s mission. Our thanks to all who attended the reception and welcomed Roger.

Katy Anthes and Cathy Walker attended the First International Conference on Teacher Training and Professional Development in Beijing, China in mid-August. Katy presented a paper, *Developing an Aligned Leadership System: A National Policy Framework as Implemented in Georgia and Oregon*, co-written with colleagues Ann Duffy of Georgia and Rob Larson of Oregon. The conference was attended by over 100 participants and accompanying guests from China and the U.S., and was organized by Global Interactions, the Beijing Institute of Education and the China International Conference Center for Science and Technology.

Charles Coble topped off his summer with a successful ascent of Long's Peak in beautiful Rocky Mountain National Park. Charlie and his climbing companions – Tom Houilhan, former executive director of CCSSO, Mike Ward, former North Carolina state superintendent, Doc Klein, president of ELI International, and John Anderson, Chief Medical Officer, Duke University Affiliated Physicians – reached the 14,259-foot summit and returned in fine form.



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