Director's Report

As a participant grappling with the proposed new fee-based membership structure at the membership summit in Houston last year, Peggy Silva, NSRF National Facilitator and writing coordinator at Souhegan High School, expressed her belief that there should be an institutional membership category that would allow individual schools to align with the work of the national organization using their own internal structures to further the work. Although the NSRF declined to consider an institutional membership in its initial membership offering, Director Steven Strull agreed to consider Souhegan's perspective for the first year of this new fee-based membership. Steven and Peggy decided to share their perspectives in Connections, as part of this issue's Director's Report, and are inviting others to comment.

Peggy Silva: CFGs serve as the foundation of professional development at Souhegan High School in Amherst, New Hampshire. All 120+ members of our professional staff and administrators, and over 30 members of our support staff, are members of CFGs, meeting monthly during a two-hour delayed opening. Our CFGs provide support to our Career Growth Process, the R & D branch of our professional development. We are a CFG school, and have been for many years. We have trained most of our own coaches, and our three National Facilitators sponsor annual trainings. We provide three days of training each year for our coaches, and send coaches to the NSRF Winter Meeting, some of whom serve as facilitators. Our National Facilitators attend NSRF meetings throughout the year and we provide articles for NSRF Connections. Yet now, despite an extraordinary commitment to this organization, we find ourselves in a dilemma with NSRF. Our organizational structure requires approximately 15 trained coaches to support our CFGs. Although we are a Center of Activity, our primary work is internal. We rely on the expertise, the research, and the professional collegiality of the national organization to augment our work and to maintain our focus. We are willing to pay for that, in the same way that we pay for our association with the Coalition of Essential Schools, another value-based organization. CES charges Souhegan an annual institutional membership fee as a school-based member of the Coalition. For the fee, Souhegan enjoys the cachet of belonging to a reform-based organization, and the opportunity to learn from others who share the same core beliefs.

As part of its shift to a dues-paying membership organization, NSRF has asked each of our coaches to join NSRF as a contributing member. As a school community, we have decided to support our coaches by paying for their participation in national meetings, by paying a stipend to our coaches, and by sponsoring and paying for their ongoing training. Our school has worked with our school board to get the time for us to work together on this essential professional development. Our National Facilitators, however, benefit in their ability to charge a fee for training others, and so our school asks them to pay for their individual membership in NSRF; we are not asking for them to be included in our school-based membership.

As a public high school here in the Live Free or Die state, we also have a very pragmatic concern about paying a contributing member.

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In This Issue
Debbie Bambino, Pennsylvania

Here at Connections, we are going to press as we prepare for the close of another school year, turn our thoughts to the design of summer institutes, and yet another new beginning in the fall. In this issue, Steven Strull and Peggy Silva invite us to eavesdrop on their ongoing conversation about Center of Activity membership in the Director's Report. Mary Hastings interviews Camilla Greene for NSRF's Living History. We learn from Julie Lindsay about efforts to embed CFG practices at the Shanghai American School and Debbie Bambino gives us a glimpse of the ongoing work of our Pennsylvania Center of Activity.

Susan Schoeler reviews Still Separate and Unequal: Segregation and the Future of Urban School Reform and the author's documentation of the failure of the possibility that was Brown vs. Board of Education. Camilla Greene shares her review of The Warrior Method: A Parents' Guide to Raising Healthy Black Boys, and wonders why educators seem more concerned with subduing rather than empowering their black, male students.

A student shares her experience visiting her mother in prison in our Students at the Center piece, and Greg Peters asks us to think together about how much we know of our students' lives after the last period of the day.

Ross Peterson-Veatch sums up our recent Research Forum and invites all of us to take our place as participants on this journey of educational action research and Roselia Holman writes about going intentionally deeper into issues of equity by adapting the basic Chalk Talk into the Triple Chalk Talk in Protocols in Practice.

Finally, we offer a summation of the Winter Meeting experience in Tampa. We hope that this issue of Connections serves you well in your own learning communities and in your summer initiatives in new locales. Let us know about your use of the journal and your needs for coverage in the future. As always, we welcome new and returning writers.

Please contact Debbie Bambino at dbambino@earthlink.net with your feedback, ideas for future articles, and/or your interest in writing for Connections.

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Connections is a journal of the National School Reform Faculty, a division of Harmony Education Center. Published three times per year, it provides a forum for CFG Coaches and other reflective educators to share their practice.

Editorial Board: Debbie Bambino, Sarah Childers, Camilla Greene and Greg Peters
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Protocols in Practice

(continued from page 18)

was the question “What is equity?” I had to ask in our debrief—how is it that “equity” is placed at the end, remotely hanging away from the other questions, as an afterthought? Is it coincidence, or is it symbolic of how equity itself is usually attended to? After the other definitions were unpacked, equity was tacked on to the tail end of our days or added as a secondary or lesser component of our agendas. It is the topic we think we should discuss, but because we feel less competent addressing it, because of the messiness, difficulty, and lack of confidence that we sometimes feel when holding space for this volatile dialogue, it goes at the very end, sometimes in the hope that time will not allow us to get to it.

That needed to change, and so I changed it. Taking a strategic and more proactive approach, sometimes I will place it as the middle question, and at other times I reserve changing its location until later in the week to emphasize or punctuate the importance of equity as the missing puzzle piece that can move us from “too much schooling, too little education” (See Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies by Mwalimu J. Shujaa) to what is required to meet the needs of each student in order to improve academic achievement.

Therefore, the sequence of questioning toward the end of the seminar (and hopefully, participants arrive at this conclusion themselves) becomes: if we operate from the premise that schools are designed to “school” students (see: The Historic Timeline of Public Education: www.ahehr.org), we truly embrace equity, then it is our responsibility and hopefully our passion to create the conditions and circumstances in our educational environments to give each student what he/she needs by providing the essential and crucial inputs—i.e. equity in human, capital and financial resources needed to reach them well, empower them and liberate them so that they can achieve at high levels. If we choose to, we can truly educate them and enable them to make positive contributions to our local, national and global communities. In Teaching to Transgress, bell hooks says that education is the practice of freedom. How else can we become a truly democratic society?

Still Separate and Unequal
(continued from page 7)

me more convinced than ever that this is critical work for us to do.

Second, after arguing so strongly that integrated schools are essential, Gold offers very little about how we should get there. He discusses a few possibilities, then asserts that “an approach that can succeed … is small-scale voluntary integration of schools in working- and middle-class suburbs near cities.” I wish I thought that were realistic, but I don’t. So for me, the mandate of this book is to pick up where Gold leaves off. He’s stated the problem well, but offers no easy answers. Where do we go from there is up to us.

The Warrior Method
(continued from page 8)

parenting raises black boys the same way white boys are raised. Gray parenting challenges institutions regarding the treatment of black boys. Black parenting sees systems as inherently out of touch with black boys’ life goals.

There are many useful and many far-too-familiar statistics on black boys throughout the book. The statistic that was new to me is that the only age at which a black male statistically outperforms a white male is after age 85. If a black male lives to be 85, he will statistically outlive his white counterpart.

Dr. Winbush challenges any adult wanting to nourish and successfully engage black boys to know and practice the 4 C’s: Consciousness, Commitment, Cooperation, and Community. The book includes an annotated bibliography of books for black boys grades 1-6 and 7-12 that I recommend: The Warrior Method to anyone, whether he or she be a parent, grandparent, educator or concerned citizen, who wants to read a thoughtful guide to developing the fullest capacity of each black boy.

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Visit www.nartharmony.org for news, updates, protocols and event info!
Connections

Winter Meeting Wrap-Up
Sarah Childers, Indiana

In December, nearly 300 teachers, educational leaders, school administrators and researchers gathered in Tampa, Florida, for the 12th Annual NSRF Winter Meeting. Participants hailed from all over, coming from as far away as Washington State, Maine and even China to take part in NSRF’s largest annual event. Thanks to our partnership with the Lastinger Center for Learning, University of Florida and our Florida Center of Activity, we also welcomed more than a third of our total participants from Florida, a state where NSRF work is becoming a staple of the professional development work of many schools and districts.

On facilitation...
I also learned that the facilitators’ rationale for using this protocol with these questions should be made clear before it is implemented. Depending upon the purpose for using Chalk Talk, it can be counterproductive, or an escape route for addressing equity superficially, if it is only intended to be used as a “silenced” dialogue. If the equity dialogue isn’t unpacked and connected to other curricular components to deepen understandings throughout the seminar, it is insufficient- and dare I say irresponsible- to open and shut the dialogue at the Chalk Talk. For those who want to hide behind their discomfort in pressing for public conversa-
tions about the issues that beset the poor, the mar-
ginalized, children of color and other victims of bias and discrimination, it can be a way to “bring it up” without “taking it up.” While there’s safety and anonymity in the Chalk Talk, it does a disser-
tice to simply create silent spaces to name inequi-
ties without the proper curricular connections and skilled facilitation to allow participants to verbalize their thoughts and feelings that surface as a result of “doing the protocol”; without then creating and holding the space to un-silence the dialogue.

Another point that may seem minor to some was incredibly important and telling to me. As I watched the Triple Chalk Talks play out, I began to notice that while they happened in differing locales, the questions repeatedly ended up being placed in a similar order. First and second were the questions “What is education?” and “What is schooling?” usually placed in close proximity to one another. Then, in another distant space, (continued on page 19)

Protocols in Practice
(continued from page 4)

Getting to the questions
My input for changing our choice of ques-
tions was inspired by a meeting I had with Lea Delpit, where she recommended that I read her article Educators as “Seed People” Growing a New Future. This article was coupled with our CEE reading of The Nature of Discourse(s) in Education (aka Changing the Discourse in Schools) by Eugene Eubanks, Ralph Parish and Diane Smith. After multi-
ple readings and discussions, I questioned what, then, the difference is between Delpit’s defini-
tion of “education” vs. “schooling,” and Eubanks, Parish and Smith’s discourses of traditional talk and schooling that perpetuates and propagates “social reproduction” vs. transformation- what is vs. what could be? Just as we between these two constructs, the critical question we had to ask was- “what is equity?” After we interrogated our assump-
tions and beliefs and interrupted inequities, how do we begin to transition and ultimately transform our-
selves, in order to transform others? Posing these three questions:
• What is schooling?
• What is education?
• What is equity?
jut might get us to a point of challenging not just etymologies, but also educators’ understanding and manifestation of these beliefs in schools, benefit-
ing students and their families and, consequently, society.

Testing out Triple Chalk Talk
I learned to transformation and not simply reproduce unsuccessful high schools on a smaller scale! As some of us began to wrestle with these questions ourselves, we were amazed at the dis-
sonance that it caused within each of us and among the participants, and at the revelation that what they were doing in their schools that would eventually only get them to the same results as the schools they sought to change.

The mere suggestion of changing the structure and content of the Chalk Talk was met with some trepidation. Because we were an “out of the box” ally only get them to the same results as the schools they sought to change. For those who were held the space to un-silence the dialogue at the Chalk Talk. For those who were held in contempt...
Protocols in Practice: The Triple Chalk Talk - An Alternative Way to “Set It Off”
RoLesia Holman, North Carolina

I explicitly recall having a conversation with Nancy Mohr when she, Katy Kelly and I participated in the Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools’ (BayCES) Leading for Equity seminar in the summer of 2004. I remember thinking, it seems like a perfect marriage... if we could integrate BayCES’s equity pedagogy with the processes and protocols of NSRF, LO and beyond, it wasn’t long afterward that the work began with a few of our National Facilitators and BayCES colleagues, work that launched the Coaching for Educational Equity (CFEE) Seminar in the summer of 2005. This particular article is intended to put to paper some thinking that was a radical departure from business as usual, and that we had to research, adopt, and implement critical pedagogy and practices that were engaging and potentially transformative. As we sought to create agendas for those who were interested in professional learning communities that were a radical departure from business as usual, we knew that we had to research, adopt, and implement critical pedagogy and practices that were engaging and potentially transformative. As a group, some of the National Facilitators from our CFEE cohort, we continued to grapple with processes and content that would deepen our practice and intensify the experiences of those who passionately wanted to explore what it might look like to interrogate, interrupt, transition and transform our cognitive and emotional selves as part of our quest to create small, personalized, equitable learning communities for students. The goal was to change the predictable outcomes for unsuccessful/traditionally low-performing students, we asked ourselves “How could we begin our seminars by setting the conditions for participants to be reflective and interrogate their own values, beliefs and assumptions about schooling in order to recognize what they actually believe to be true about the purpose of schools?” We wanted to bring to the surface what participants actually believe and challenge them to think differently about how to redesign learning environments so that they would yield a different set of results for students who had been neither compliant nor appropriately involved in school.

As most educators do, we went with what we knew, but allowed ourselves to be challenged to be far more rigorous and recreate the experiences that would stretch us and the participants. We shared with each other our individual and collective experiences from working around the country, where we witnessed various attempts at starting new small schools. Unfortunately, we saw that most new small schools, after a year or two, began to look very much like many others. From our collective observations and data compiled from national and local reports on school achievement, most new high schools were turning out to be miniature replicas of large comprehensive high schools with minimal changes in performance results or adult/student relationships. Having the experiences of serving as a director of creating new small schools, advocating for them and coaching them, I took the liberty of putting my own spin on what we conventionally know as the Chalk Talk.

Chalk Talk: its purpose was clear and familiar in most contexts, but for the onset of a seminar, it was not sufficiently provocative in getting participants to think differently about how to create school cultures and establish relationships and instructional practices that would get a different set of outcomes for students who historically had been least served and were yet the most needy.

Triple Chalk Talk

How could we preserve and protect the integrity of Chalk Talk while increasing its rigor, relationship and relevance to the content which was to follow? The responses to that question lead to the “Triple Chalk Talk.” The thought was to ask not just one question, but three that would cause people to enter a space of dissonance-dissonance that was intended to direct us inward and call to the fore that which was both personal and professional, cognitive and emotional.

Reflection quotes:

Warm
• Our facilitators did an excellent job of meeting the needs of our group.
• Incredible! This was an unbelievably relevant and productive conference.
• Thank you for bringing in Gloria Merrieux. She was quite an inspiration. What an amazing “giver” she is.
• We worked together more deeply than any other group I have ever been a part of!
• I plan to do this work at my school. I think this is a great way to look at and learn from student work.

Cool
• I would like more “nuts and bolts” information/resources about how to implement SLCs in different school settings.
• I was disappointed in the facilitation of my Home Group. It felt like the main facilitator was teaching us. The focus seemed to be on acting as a CFG rather than on deepening any aspect of our facilitation. Not much processing – and even sometimes, no debrief.
• As far as I could tell issues of equity were not part of the ongoing conversation.
• Time was rushed but meaningful.
• I brought student work and was disappointed I did not get to present.

Instead, those of us who remained met to debrief the meeting and discuss plans for the next Winter Meeting.

The 2009 Winter Meeting, which will be our lucky 13, will be held in Texas, where we will be hosted by no fewer than three NSRF Centers of Activity: Houston Independent School District, the Urban Forum for Leadership and Learning/Houston Independent School District, and San Antonio NSRF Center at Trinity University. We look forward to seeing you all again next January!

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For more Winter Meeting follow-up, including evaluation results and please visit our website, www.nsrfharmony.org.

Winter Meeting Wrap-Up
(continued from page 3)

Shanghai American School
(continued from page 14)

year fatigue to be with their groups. Similarly, this fall the school superintendent proposed a program based on CFG protocols and CFG leaders. This developed into our IIT (Teacher Facilitator Training) program. The TFI was designed to provide videevo to two three-day training for all teacher leaders to become facilitators of CFG protocols for all school meetings and collaboration on every team across the school. The intent of this program was to initiate a kind of systemic CFG presence across the school to provide equity, voice, and effectiveness in meetings at every level.

I cannot help but be disappointed that the essential work of teachers sharing their teaching practices and strategies in the context of comfortable community circles is not moving forward as quickly as I would like. I am encouraged, however, by the positive reactions of many of my colleagues as they are exposed to the protocols in areas like full faculty meetings, key accreditation committees involving parents, admin, and teachers, as well as developing programs like teacher assistant training, parent education groups, and high school student associations. That’s not to say that we have found no resistance to the use of protocols, but what began as an October cohort of 15 participants is moving into a scope of acceptance and use across an organization of hundreds. Indeed, as we get ready to go back to school after the Chinese New Year break, I feel that, by and large, the majority of teachers in this faculty of about 300 are feeling the community building power of the conversations that CFG protocols bring to their professional lives.

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Shanghai American School
13th Annual
NSRF Winter Meeting
Houston, Texas
January 15th-17th, 2009

for more information, visit: www.nsrfharmony.org/ wintermeeting.html

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Shanghai American School
How does who you are inform what you do within NSRF? How does your identity shape your work? How do you navigate the challenges of being an ally? And what role does privilege play in your work with students?

How has NSRF influenced your work? How has your work with NSRF influenced your personal growth and development?

What are your hopes for NSRF in the future? What changes do you anticipate in the field of education, and how can NSRF contribute to those changes?

In what capacities have you found CFG work to be most effective? How has CFG work impacted your students and your own growth as an educator?

What are the obstacles to this? What are the challenges you face in terms of implementing CFG work in your own context? How do you overcome these challenges?

What are your greatest hopes for NSRF? What changes do you hope to see in the field of education, and how can NSRF contribute to those changes?

What are the obstacles to this? What are the challenges you face in terms of implementing CFG work in your own context? How do you overcome these challenges?
The Pennsylvania Center of Activity is actually the greater Philadelphia Center, with members who work in schools in Philadelphia, the adjacent suburbs, and New Jersey. The Leadership CFG that directs our work has eleven members who have been meeting in our current community for nearly five years. Most of us are National Facilitators and some of us have been working together in schools for almost twenty years, as well as in assorted CFGs since 1996.

We are a community of educators across difference. We are white and African American, Anglo and Latino, female and male, Christian and Jewish educators. Today our core of eleven members is dispersed across the spectrum of school administration, from elementary through intermediate and high school, and at the district level as leaders responsible for the professional development of all administrators, and for support for student assistance teams. As a graduate student and external coach, I am the only member who is not working full-time in the schools.

Most of our CFG work is embedded in the way we do things as administrators and internal/external coaches. However, we have also offered seminars for new coaches and summer professional development for administrators in our districts each year. This year our Leadership CFG is digging into the history of race and conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools by Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton. While we were building awareness of issues in the past, this intentional focus on race is “disturbing our comfort” and opening us up to new possibilities for growth and change as practice. Here are some reflections from last month’s meeting:

- This group is taking me to a level of thinking and self-evaluation that I did not envision before.
- Examining who I am and how the world sees me has made me think differently about my practice.
- Equity/Race Roadmap—Powerful time spent in self-reflection, deepening self-awareness, envisioning the physical & emotional & social journey with the goal in sight. I know that I will revisit this roadmap either alone or with this group to maintain my focus on the journey.
- The continuation of your acceptance—there was a moment of fear as I passed my very personal roadmap for the first time—and I realized it was in the hands of a very trusted critical friend.

Be courageous in my conversation with staff.
• AWESOME activity; very reflective; some of my experiences were brought to them to the surface; appreciated the sharing of others that allows me the opportunity to see what shaped/shapes perspectives on race, equity...I can use this with my staff.

As we come to the close of another school year we are pressing forward with our focus on race and equity by filtering next year’s planning through the lens presented by Singleton and Linton’s opening questions:

- What is it that [we] educators should know and do to narrow the racial achievement gap?
- How will [we] educators know when [we] are experiencing success in our efforts to narrow the racial achievement gap?
- What [will] we do as [we] discover what [we] don’t yet know and are not yet able to do to eliminate the racial achievement gap?

As part of our efforts, we are moving the test-based conversation into our schools and leadership teams and reconceiving the shape and design of our seminar and workshop agendas.

Organizationally, we are taking a long view of our work and our ability to sustain it over time: we need to be in a sustained collaborative campaign to partner with a university or universities in the coming years. As budgets become tighter, our schools need outside support to fund the learning and practice of collaborative learning communities in the Philadelphia area. To date we have, and have had, case-by-case university support of specific seminars and retreats developed through grants, our personal networks and our jobs-related roles. We need a sustained plan of action to develop a university-based and -funded Center of Continuing Education for Critical Friends with the possibility of college credits and research support. Universities would also allow us to reach out to students and families in our efforts to extend community membership to the nonprofessional stakeholders who are at the center of our work. We welcome the feedback of our colleagues in NSRF who have already developed successful university partnerships.

For more information, or to offer your feedback, please write to Debbie Bambino at dbambino@earthlink.net.
and had been so impressed that he traveled to small town Georgia to meet with our facilitator. He said that for those of us who introduced CFGs across our organization was a key to the success of our teachers and community. He also admitted that the empowerment of teachers could be scary for administrators, but he said he was willing to give it a try. On that note, we started our CFG training with a cross-division group from the two campuses. As in any overseas setting, we had a wide variety of teachers in terms of experience, language, culture, and roles. Over those initial three days, what we came to call “The October Cohort” grew to understand CFG protocols as key in building relationships that foster trust and support among teachers. Every person in the group left feeling the warmth of their SAS community and the potential that CFG could create networks around the school and in their professional lives. Those of us who had undertaken the training started our own CFGs in our divisions and teams, and found that, slowly, administrators were beginning to understand the power of the protocols that were being used in these groups. Though the groups represented a small number of our faculty, the administration persisted with more training workshops and kept bringing Frances from Georgia to keep the CFG ball rolling. Mid year, our cohort completed its training and by the June of 2007, we had trained 8 groups at some level in all divisions and were preparing to offer a week of training at the end of the school year. So one year and a half later, what is the status of CFGs in our school? As the 07-08 academic year rolls full steam ahead, we find ourselves facing an obstacle that all schools struggle with: time. The schools Gold studied were four “Abbott” schools, so-called because of the 1996 New Jersey Supreme Court case Abbott v. Burke V. The ruling in this case mandated unprecedented reforms for “isolated, racially segregated urban elementary schools” and the funds to carry them out. Using ethnographic methods of collecting data, Gold focused on two schools each in Elizabeth and Newark, New Jersey, over seven years, from 1998 through 2005. In 2002, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) took effect, so Gold was also able to observe the effects of NCLB implementation in the four schools. Gold devotes his initial chapters to a history of the Abbott V decision and the NCLB Act as well as the changes that produced the economically depressed and highly segregated residential urban areas where the Abbott schools are located. After explaining his theoretical framework, he presents detailed records of his observations. These sections are slow reading, but they are necessary to support Gold’s conclusions in his final two chapters. Throughout the book, Gold uses the word “equity,” echoing the language of Brown v. Board of Education, though he appears to mean “equality” rather than “sameness.” As a result of his observations, he concludes that separate schools cannot be equal, no matter how much money is poured into them. Nor only did the major reforms of Abbott V and NCLB fail to close the achievement gap, but in some cases, the gap widened. Gold concludes that a major reason for this is that in implementing the Abbott reforms, “administrators and teachers, ignored, rejected, or modified [proposed new] programs and practices.” This resistance to change in many cases stemmed from the convictions of well-intentioned teachers and/or administrators that the appropriate methods for teaching “these kids” are different from those found in schools in suburban areas. Thus, we see in one school, “I don’t care if you don’t know what you’re doing. I just want you to get the right answer,” and in others the conviction that their students “needed discipline, structure, and the basics,” rather than methods which were perceived as “too child-centered.”

Gold refers to this attitude as the “eco-cognitive framework,” and laments how, because of it, “the administrators and faculty of these schools managed to reshape or resist the most powerful interventions to improve student learning that American society has developed over the decades that ‘integration … is the only way to reconfigure the deep structure of urban education by delegitimizing the eco-cognitive framework.”

Unlike Abbott V, the NCLB Act had the power of external intervention behind it, and did succeed in making significant changes, but Gold asserts that those changes “further increase[d] the inequality of separate schools” by narrowing the curriculum and assessments focused on standardized test scores. Even without the rest of the book, I believe Gold’s last chapter is essential for anyone concerned with urban education reform. Gold considers a number of possibilities for change and evaluates them based on the conclusions stemming from his research. Many of his ideas are not new. What is new is the weight of well-designed and well-documented research behind the conclusions. The book thus provides a major contribution to the research literature on educational reform. I find two major weaknesses in Gold’s conclusions. First, I would not be so quick to give up on the possibility of changing the eco-cognitive framework. Perhaps it is a major contribution of Gold’s research to point out that we must work on that, first of all, before any reform has a chance to succeed. I believe well-intentioned teachers can unlearn the stereotypes they hold about their students. We at the NSRF have the tools to help them do that, and Gold’s discoveries make
The Warrior Method: A Parents’ Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys

Book Review by Camilla Greene, Pennsylvania

Dr. Winbush

My daughter, who became a mother in October, asked for books on raising black boys. We went to the local Barnes and Noble looking for and asking for books on raising black boys. There were no books to be found on the shelves. I Googled “raising African American boys” and a list of books appeared on the Amazon website. One title intrigued me—The Warrior Method: A Parents’ Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys by Dr. Raymond A. Winbush. I purchased the book for my daughter and with her permission I read it before she did.

My work as a school change coach and as an NSRF National Facilitator is in school districts across the country, in high school classrooms mostly in urban areas, and with educators, mostly white. I hear a lot of moaning about black boys and their lack of motivation; I hear stories of their “gang involvement.” I hear about and observe the black boys being disciplined and referred to as “unruly.” Most of the classroom management problems brought to my attention involve getting black boys interested in education. I notice black boys and black girls with their heads down on desks when I pass classrooms. Too often I observe a lot of adult educators controlling, disciplining and I hear a lot of adult educators refer to the medication used or needed to “subdue” black boys. Seldom do I hear a request about ways to empower, or pull out the needed to “subdue” black boys. Seldom do I hear a request about ways to empower, or pull out the

fee. Public schools do not have the luxury of paying for a philosophical alignment; we cannot say to our school board that although I support each black boy, I want there is a range of $25–$75 per member, we want to pay $75 per coach because we believe in the mission of the NSRF. As we are a public institution, our budget is developed in conjunction with the school board and a finance committee, and is then voted on by the town. A system which changes by the coach would lead to some pressure to have fewer coaches, whereas a flat fee to several national organizations is an acceptable line item in our budget.

Souhegan High School accepts its responsibility to serve as active members of NSRF. To that end we are in support of paying an institutional membership fee for our school.

Steven Strull: Souhegan High School and many of its teachers and administrators have been active members in NSRF since its inception. There is great value in having Souhegan continue its tradition of using CFGs as the foundation of its professional development program, both for the school and the national organization, and the unintended consequence of limiting that participation based on NSRF’s conversion to a dues-paying membership organization has to be considered.

In both written and verbal communication, Peggy and Principal Scott Prescott have made comments about the consideration of a school- based membership option. After careful consideration, I decided to accept Souhegan’s proposal for an institutional membership that covers all of Souhegan’s staff as members of NSRF. I made this decision as an exception to our current structure and I realize the dilemma I may have put NSRF in. However, Souhegan made a compelling argument, and they were the only school to ask for such consideration. While some Centers of Activity and a few school districts have inquired about institutional membership, I have asked those folks to understand the institutional membership is essential to the national organization to act as a vital member of our collective community.

Souhegan High School’s unwavering commitment to NSRF and to support our national organization and mission by making a voluntary contribution to NSRF. As director, I am quite hopeful we are learning from this accommodation for black boys and younger black boys living in urban areas want to know how to “man up,” to use a street term. Young black men listening to media-promoted hip-hop and most young boys who are involved with gangs learn a variety of ways to “man up.” Many of the ways promoted by street gangs and media-sponsored hip-hop to “man up” are violent, misogynistic, homophobic, and dehumanizing. Dr. Winbush offers many practical ways to raise black boys from infancy to adulthood. He offers a “warrior method” to black parents and to educators both black and white.

Dr. Winbush recounts the story of Sengbeh Pieh, renamed “Joseph Cinque” by his captors, who stole him and forced him to travel on the Amistad vessel. The story of Sengbeh is further developed in the story of Samuel Hibeh Pibie, the greatgrandson of Sengbeh Pieh. Dr. Winbush differentiates among three prevalent styles of black parenting. He identifies these styles as black parents who opt to use “white parenting,” “gray parenting,” and “black parenting.” White (continued on page 19)

particular are victims of interrupted and stolen his- tory. It is through reconnecting with that history that young boys will be able to turn away from the murderous and suicidal effects of internalized and transferred racism and the negative effects of growing up black in racist America. Throughout the book, Dr. Winbush provides the training young Sengbeh received in his African community, train- ing provided by the family elders and community that demonstrated how to care for self, how to relate to others in a global sense; and taught him how, as a man, he could take responsibility for self, family and community. Dr. Winbush draws a direct link between Sengbeh’s training as an African boy and his ability to survive the ordeal of captivity and successfully learn the language of his oppressors well enough to be able to defend him- self in a foreign court of law.

In addition to offering a thoughtful plan for using African rites of passage to impart the wis- dom of the ancestors to young black boys, Dr. Winbush highlights among three prevalent styles of black parenting. He identifies these styles as black parents who opt to use “white parenting,” “gray parenting,” and “black parenting.” White
In August 2006, I arrived at Shanghai American School wondering what kind of community I’d find. My husband and I have been teaching overseas for thirteen years, at five different schools in Asia and the Middle East, and in that time many of our friends and family at home have asked us how we do it. How do we pack up our belongings and move with our two children to jobs, cities, and countries entirely new to us, where we don’t know the language and we can’t read the signs? A job at an international school, however, is much more than a hundred and eighty days of teaching and a check every month. When you take a job overseas, someone meets you at the airport and takes you to where you will sleep that night. Someone shows you where to buy bread and milk and toasters and televisions. As you start your new job you meet other teachers, some of whom are new, like you, and some of whom have been around for years. You swap stories with the former, and take advice from the latter. You go out for dinner, and you go shopping. You make friends, and with any luck your kids do too. You enter a community.

International school teaching has its material perks—tax free incomes, low cost daily living, and lots of opportunity to travel—but the best overseas posts, I think, are defined not by the salary package or living standards, but by the warmth of the community. International school teachers will often identify a special spot: the time they spent in the most difficult circumstances, in developing countries or areas of conflict, precisely because the dull routine of day to day life brought people together. It was immediately clear that day to day life in Shanghai was going to be comfortable—our apartment building is like a resort hotel—but as we went through the orientation week activities with the other eighty or so new hires we quickly found other families to bond with. Shanghai American School, however, is China’s largest international school, and the largest school Andree and I had ever worked in. SAS is about 70 teachers and my life in the initial stages focused on the six members of my grade level team. It was clear that there were many exceptional and talented teachers in the organization, but there just didn’t seem to be enough systems in place to allow teachers to take time to plan, collaborate, and grow together.

It was then that I found an email in my inbox announcing an opportunity for teachers to join CFG training with Dr. Frances Hensley, a consultant from the University of Georgia and a member of National School Reform Faculty. As I read the mission statement of the NSF for the first time I thought about other schools I had taught in, schools where I had felt the essential support of community that the mission statement described, and about how that support permeated all facets of my life as a faculty member. The brief description of the CFG training sparked a hope that our large school could begin to find connections that could bring teachers together in meaningful ways. On the first morning of our training the school superintendent took some time out from his busy schedule to join our meeting. He told us the story of how he had heard about CFGs in the US (continued on page 14).

The 3rd Annual NSF Research Forum ushered in a new day for our fledgling research group. Some school leaders emerged from our disparate work in various places. While the themes we explored were as diverse as “Conflict in Our Collaborative Community” and “Interrogating the Culture of Protocols: Developing a Research Plan,” there were three issues that clearly cut across everyone’s work.

1. The role of the participant observer/action researcher—many of us are interested in exploring what the appropriate role for us as both facilitators/coaches and researchers. Most participants presented research on their own CFGs and our questions about what roles we ought to play in these groups was of critical importance both to us as researchers and for us as an organization that is moving more towards generating high-quality research on CFGs.

2. The importance of using conversation structures to change the culture of a school—many of us were concerned with the shift that were or were not possible using structure to affect the culture of a group, a building or an entire district. Ellen Ballock and Doug Fabey both addressed this question directly in their presentations.

3. The reframing of equity from being a side issue to being the central issue—one of many we were working on to see what methods and what avenues we could support that might support a shift in school and teacher cultures from equity as an issue that might “complicate things,” to equity as the lens through which teachers examine their work. This was especially evident in the sessions hosted by Donna Reid and Katy Kelly, and Doug Elder and Doug Wager.

These three themes represent the beginnings of a research program for us at NSF and are an exciting step forward from past years’ meetings to a new kind of research meeting. Next year’s meeting promises to be even more exciting as we begin to roll out more longitudinal work and new connections between our work and achievement. I would encourage anyone and all who are interested in research to participate—no matter what your role at home may be. This year we benefited from the participation of K-12 teachers and administrators, higher-ed faculty and administrators.
Every Sunday morning I would wake up to a fresh glass of ripe orange juice, that tasted so sweet, but I never could quite keep down. Tension knotted in the depths of my stomach; anxiety made me shake. An interesting mixture of nervousness and excitement flowed through my pulsating veins as I stepped into the back seat of our silver/gray beat-up Toyota. We whisked past the dead brown stench of dried hills, what is left of a completely black and white cows blurred in my sleepy eyes, followed by the heat of still air as we sat in traffic for only five more minutes. We drove through an army base, a training camp that existed right across the street from my destination… my mother. My mother was hidden behind the barbed wire, metal detectors, cold steel, shackles and clanking chains that kept her inside this place, prison. As my dad and I pulled up to the front gates on those Sunday mornings, my child body became restless. The two long to see the visitor held behind the doors, the visitor that everyone around has been talking about. We were the only option I had.

"How did she survive here?"

"How did she escape?"

"How did she survive here?"

I didn’t want to make our only time together depressing, so I just avoided asking the questions. Instead, I would tell her about school, about my teachers and my friends. Her smooth voice and calming tone made me feel like I was back at home, just for a moment. She knew how to make me giggle and laugh, making the experience of visiting my mother in prison as enjoyable as it possibly could be. She would tell jokes and tickle me (only she knew my most ticklish spots).

Occasionally I brought my best friend with me to visit my mom, so I could bring the different parts of my life together in that same beige visiting room. I was never ashamed that my mom was in prison. I was more proud than anything else, because I could show people that no matter what she’s done in the past, she’s still my mom. I could teach people that being incarcerated doesn’t make you a bad person. Whether you are guilty or not, prisoners are still human beings, just like anyone else. My mom was my mom no matter what, and her incarceration never changed that. I was proud that she stood up for herself, that she didn’t let the prison environment become an excuse to be depressed. She never let them take her spirit; this always amazed me.

That visiting room holds so many of my childhood memories; a part of me grew up there. I recall the first time a guard yelled at me. I was four-years-old and I’d gone over to say hello to another prisoner - a friend of my mom’s who I also had known. Of course, this type of behavior was never allowed in the visiting room because you may only have one family member with you, and the only fact with the inmate you signed up to visit. How was she able to stay strong? How was she able to understand this? How was I to comprehend that I was not allowed to say hello to someone I knew? In that experience I learned to fear guards and police officers, and eventually to hate them. I grew up being scared of the people in uniform who I had to be around and trust.

I also spent a considerable amount of time without my mom in the visiting room. I would go to the kids’ play area, where she wasn’t allowed, and play with other kids while my parents had their visit. I drew pictures and played with toys. Some of the older girls used to bribe my hair, and we would all just try and make the best of the situation. Knowing we all had something in common made it easier. There was no awkward period to get over the question of where your parents were. Occasionally, there would be someone directing an arts and crafts project. While this was fun for me, I often sat there staring through the window, back out at my mom. All I longed for was to be by her side.

With my mom, we talked, we laughed, we cried, until it was time to say goodbye. Saying goodbye to my mom was the one thing I swore I would never be able to do again, yet every week I was forced to. During those goodbyes, when everyone got quiet, the mothers’ tears slid down their cheeks, mirroring their sobbing children. I would hold on to my mom for as long as possible. We would repeat “I love you” and “goodbye” to each other.

Even today, going back to that visiting room makes my eyes tear up watching other children desperately clinging to their own mothers, just how I used to do. Each time I would leave her with the strongest of hope in the depths of my heart that this would not be the last Black said goodbye to her. Leaving my mom was the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do, yet it was the only option I had. I wanted so much to take her home with me, to show her my room, my friends, my life. Every time I had a chance to blow out birthday candles or to make a wish in a fountain, it was for my mom to come home with me. All I desired was for that missing piece to be filled in, for her to be able to complete my puzzle. But she couldn’t. This is why I will never forget those Sunday morning visits, one chance to be a part of her life.

Zoe W. is a Senior at Leadership High School to San Francisco, CA. Next year she will attend Mills College.

Greg Peters can be contacted at gpeters@sfcess.org.
Sunday Morning

Zoe W., California

What do we really know about our students? What do we know about their lives between the time we send them off to do their homework and when they return and we greet them each day? How do we find out? How does what we know impact our expectations of them? or the strategies we use to support their reaching our expectations? What expectations do our students have of themselves; to what extent do we assume – or interpret that their expectations are different? Zoe W. offers insight into her life – a life that we as teachers and mentors can learn a great deal from, if we have the courage to make the connection.

Greg Peters, California

Every Sunday morning I would wake up to a fresh glass of ripe orange juice, that tasted so sweet, but I never could quite keep down. Tension knotted in the depths of my stomach; anxiety made me shake. An interesting mixture of nervousness and excitement flowed through my pulsating veins as I stepped into the back seat of our silver/orange beat-up Toyota. We whizzed past the dead brown stench of dried hills that were completely with black and white cows blurring in my sleepless eyes, followed by the heat of still air as we sat in traffic for hours. As it possibly could be. She would tell jokes and tickle me (only she knew my most ticklish spots). As it, my mom would be the one to walk out. Eventually, she would, but each time I stood there waiting, I feared that she would never come out to see me again. She quickly walked through the doors, standing tall at five foot even. Her short, dyed-red hair bobbing at her shoulders, and kind face, immediately put me at ease. I remember rushing across the room to get to her, and holding on so tight I thought I'd never let go. That is until a guard came along, staring at me, and holding on so tight I thought I'd never let go. That is until a guard came along, staring us down, his eyes working like pliers, determined to pull us apart.

Those visits flew by quickly; I can hardly recall the time we actually spent together. I do remember just wanting to sit there and talk forever, wanting her to know what my life was like, and also the curiosity in my head of what it must be like for her to be stuck in this place, but I never got around to those questions. I was too scared to know. I didn't want to think about what she was going through, so I left it up to my imagination. Still, the questions stayed in my mind:

What was prison like?

How did they treat her?

How did she survive here?

I didn't want to make our only time together depressing, so I just avoided asking the questions. Instead, I would tell her about school, about my teachers and my friends. Her smooth voice and calming tone made me feel like I was back at home, just for a moment. She knew how to make me giggle and laugh, making the experience of visiting my mother in prison as enjoyable as it possibly could be. She would tell jokes and tickle me (only she knew my most ticklish spots).

Occasionally I brought my best friend with me to visit my mom, so I could bring the different parts of my life together in that same beige visiting room. I was never ashamed that my mom was in prison. I was more proud than anything else, because I could show people that no matter what she’s done in her past, she’s still my mom. I always teach people that being incarcerated doesn’t make you a bad person.

Whether you are guilty or not, prisoners are still human beings, just like anyone else. My mom was my mom no matter what, and her incarceration never changed that. I was proud that she stood up for herself, that she didn’t let the prison environment become an excuse to be depressed. She never let them take her spirit; this always amazed me.

That visiting room holds so many of my childhood memories; a part of me grew up there. I recall the first time a guard yelled at me. I was four years old and I’d gone over to say hello to another prisoner – a friend of my mom’s who I also had known. Of course, this type of behaviour is “unacceptable” in the visiting room because you may only have one visit per month and you must interact with the inmate you signed up to visit. How was I to comprehend that I was not allowed to touch her, to hold her, to talk to her? My mom was my mom no matter what, and her incarceration never changed that. With my mom, we talked, we laughed, we cried, until it was time to say goodbye. Saying goodbye to my mom was the one thing I swore I would never be able to do again, yet every week I was forced to. During those goodbyes, when everyone got quiet, the mothers’ tears slid down their cheeks, mirroring their sobbing children. I would hold on to my mom for as long as possible. We repeated “I love you” and “goodbye” to each other.

Even today, going back to that visiting room makes my eyes tear up watching other children desperately clinging to their own mothers, just how I used to. Each time I would leave her with the strongest of hope in the depths of my heart that this behavior would not be the last time Black said goodbye to her. Leaving my mom was the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do, yet it was the only option I had. I wanted so much to take her home with me, to show her my room, to name the windows, to embrace her, to take her for a ride, to be with the window, back out at my mom. All I longed for was to be by her side.

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Zoe W. is a Senior at Leadership High School to San Francisco, CA. Next year she will attend Mills College.

Greg Peters can be contacted at gpeters@ucsc.org.
Shanghai American School
Julie Lindsay, China

In August 2006, I arrived at Shanghai American School wondering what kind of community I’d find. My husband and I had been teaching overseas for thirteen years, at five different schools in Asia and the Middle East, and in that time many of our friends and family at home had asked us how we do it. How do we pack up our belongings and move with our two children to jobs, cities, and countries entirely new to us, where we don’t know the language and we can’t read the signs? A job at an international school, however, is much more than a hundred and eighty days of teaching and a check every month. When you take a job overseas, someone meets you at the airport and takes you to where you will sleep that night. Someone shows you where to buy bread and milk and toasters and televisions. As you start your new job you meet other teachers, some of whom are new, like you, and some of whom have been around for years. You snap stories with the former, and take advice from the latter. You go out for dinner, and you go shopping. You make friends, and with any luck your kids do too. You enter a community.

International teaching has its material perks—tax free incomes, low cost daily living, and lots of opportunity to travel—but the best overseas posts, I think, are defined not by the salary package or living standards, but by the warmth of the community. International school teachers will often identify as particularly fortunate the time they spent in the most difficult circumstances, in developing countries or areas of conflict, precisely because the difficulties of daily life brought people together. It was immediately clear that day to day life in Shanghai was going to be comfortable—our apartment complex is like a resort hotel—but as we went through the orientation week activities with the other eighty or so new hires we quickly found other people meeting us at the airport and taking us to our homes. Someone would show us where to buy bread and milk and toasters and televisions. Someone would pick us up from the airport and take us to our apartment. Someone would show us where we would sleep that night. Someone would show us how to buy bread and milk and toasters and televisions.

It was then that I found an email in my inbox announcing an opportunity for teachers to join CFG training with Dr. Frances Hensley, a consultant from the University of Georgia and a member of National School Reform Faculty. As I read the mission statement of the CFG for the first time, I thought about other schools I had taught in, schools where I had felt the essential support of community that the mission statement described, and about how that support permeated all facets of my life as a faculty member. The brief description of the CFG training sparked a hope that our large division could begin to find connections that could bring teachers together in meaningful ways.

If you have any interest in this work, please contact NSRF Research Coordinator Kevin Faby at kfaby@vcsen.org

Research Forum Report
Ross Peterson-Veatch, Indiana

The 3rd Annual NSRF Research Forum ushered in a new day for our fledgling research group. Some school-based themes emerged from our disparate work in various places. While the themes we explored were as diverse as “Conflict in Our Collaborative Community” and “Interrogating the Culture of Protocols: Developing a Research Plan,” there were three issues that clearly cut across everyone’s work.

1. The role of the participant observer/action researcher – many of us are interested in exploring what the appropriate role is for us as both facilitators/coaches and researchers. Most participants presented research on their own CFGs and our questions about what roles we ought to play in these groups were of critical importance both to us as researchers and for us as an organization that is moving more towards generating high-quality research on CFGs.

2. The importance of using conversation structures to change the culture of a school – many of us were concerned with the shift that was or were not possible using structure to affect the culture of a group, a building or an entire district. Ellen Ballock and Doug Wager both addressed this question directly in their presentations.

3. The reframing of equity from being a side issue to being the central issue – many of us were working to examine what methods and what avenues we could identify that might support a shift in school and teacher cultures from equity as an issue that might “complicate things,” to equity as the lens through which teachers examine their work. This was especially evident in the sessions hosted by Donna Reid and Katy Kelly, and Doug Elder and Doug Wager.

These three themes represent the beginnings of a research program for NSRF and are an exciting step forward from past years’ meetings to a new kind of research meeting. Next year’s meeting promises to be even more exciting as we begin to roll out more longitudinal work and new connections between our work and achievements. I would encourage any and all who are interested in research to participate – no matter what your role at home may be. This year we benefited from the participation of K-12 teachers and administrators, higher-ed faculty and administrators, and invited specialists from organizations and foundations. I encourage all of us to open our CFGs once a year in October to invite new people to our work, to expand our network, to contribute to the conversation between our work and achievements. The “October Protocol” might just be the fundraiser your CFG is looking for. Feel free to contact me for more information.

Ross Peterson-Veatch can be reached at rosvp@iogen.edu

Gandhi once said, “You must become the change you wish to see in the world.” We must invite the educators we wish to see in the NSRF movement to our CFGs, trainings and meetings. The Winter Meeting, January 15-17th, 2009, is the next opportunity. Our national and local professional机动 activites need to reach these new faces.

We must include these new faces in the planning, discussions, activities behind-the-scenes, and speeches from the podium that shape the quality of NSRF experiences. Our membership structure was created to preserve the tradition that NSRF resources are free. The National Center encourages us to invite new people to our work, to expand our network, to contribute to the conversation between our work and achievements. We must invite the educators we wish to see in the NSRF movement to our CFGs, trainings and meetings. The Winter Meeting, January 15-17th, 2009, is the next opportunity. Our national and local professional activities need to reach these new faces.

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My daughter, who became a mother in October, asked for books on raising black boys. I went to the local Barnes and Noble looking for and asking for books on raising black boys. There were no books to be found on the shelves. I Googled “raising African American boys” and a list of books appeared on the Amazon website. One title intrigued me: The Warrior Method: A Parent’s Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys by Dr. Raymond A. Winbush. I purchased the book for my daughter and with her permission I read it before she did.

My work as a school change coach and as an NSRF National Facilitator is in school districts across the country, in high school classrooms mostly in urban areas, and with educators, mostly white. I hear a lot of moaning about black boys and their lack of motivation; I hear stories of their “gang involvement.” I hear about and observe the black boys being disciplined and referred to as “unruly.” Most of the classroom management problems brought to my attention involve getting black boys interested in education. I notice black boys and black girls with their heads down on desks when I pass classrooms. Too often I observe a lot of adult educators controlling, disciplining and I hear a lot of adult educators refer to the medication used or needed to “subdue” black boys. Seldom do I hear a request about ways to empower, or pull out the needed to “subdue” black boys. Seldom do I hear a request about ways to empower, or pull out the needed to “subdue” black boys.

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Winbush differentiates among three prevalent styles of black parenting. He identifies these styles as black parents who opt to use “white parenting,” “gray parenting,” and “black parenting.” White (continued on page 19)
The great success of the June cohort was that Chinese teachers numbered more than half of the group. Here, I had the chance to see part of the unique Chinese culture. The teachers in this large American organization were really like the week ended with feelings of elation, possibility, and cross-cultural connections as we said our goodbyes for the summer.

A less obvious change, but one that I think has far reaching potential, has been the introduction of CFGs across our organization was a key to the success of our teachers and community. He also admitted that the empowerment of teachers could be scary for administrators, but he said he was willing to give it a try.

On that note, we started our CFG training with a cross-division group from the two campuses. As in any overseas setting, we had a wide variety of teachers in terms of experience, language, culture, and roles. Over those initial three days, what we came to call “The October Cohort” grew under CFG protocols as key in building relationships that foster trust and support among teachers. Every person in the group felt the warmth of their SAS community and the potential that CFG could create networks around the school and in their professional lives. Those of us who undertook the training started our own CFGs in our divisions and teams, and found that, slowly, administrators were beginning to understand the power of the protocols that were being used in these groups. Though the groups represented a small number of our faculty, the administration persisted with more training workshops and kept bringing Frances from Georgia to keep the CFG ball rolling. Mid year, our cohort completed its training and by the June of 2007, we had CFGs in the middle of an accreditation process that involves offering a week of training at the end of the school year.

So now, a year and a half later, what is the status of CFGs in our school? As the 07-08 academic year rolls full steam ahead, we find ourselves facing the reality that all schools struggle with: time. CFGs are only one of a number of school wide initiatives currently being implemented. We are in the middle of an accreditation process that involves numerous meetings outside of our regular commitments, and in a school as dynamic as ours in terms of “extra-curricular” activities, coaching, and clubs, teachers are struggling to find time to honor even a monthly commitment to CFGs. Though many people have experienced a keen and sincere interest in the groups, the fact is that the groups started last year are meeting less and less. Nonetheless, I feel that CFGs have changed the SAS community in very powerful ways.

One of the most obvious changes has been the opportunity for elementary teachers to get a glimpse of the professional lives of our Chinese colleagues.
Center of Activity Report: Pennsylvania
Debbie Bambino, Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Center of Activity is actually the greater Philadelphia Center, with members who teach in schools in Philadelphia, the adjacent suburbs, and New Jersey. The Leadership CFG that directs our work has eleven members who have been meeting in our current community for nearly five years. Most of us are National Facilitators and some of us have been working together in schools for almost twenty years, as well as in assorted CFGs since 1996.

We are a community of educators across different educational settings, including white and African American, Anglo and Latino, female and male, Christian and Jewish educators. Today our core of eleven members is dispersed across the spectrum of school administration, from elementary through intermediate and high school, and at the district level as leaders responsible for the professional development of all administrators, and for support for student assistance teams. As a graduate student and external coach, I am the only member who is not working full-time in the schools.

Most of our CFG work is embedded in the way we do business as administrators and internal/external coaches. However, we have also offered seminars for new coaches and summer professional development for administrators in our districts each year. This year our Leadership CFG is digging into the text-based conversation about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools by Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton. While we have discussed some of these issues in the past, this intentional focus on race is “disturbing our comfort” and opening us up to new possibilities for growth and change as a team.

Here are some reflections from last month’s meeting:

• This group is taking me to a level of thinking and self-evaluation that I did not envision before.
• Examining who I am and how the world sees me is the best work I have ever done and I experience it differently.
• Equity/Race Roadmap—Powerful time spent in self-reflection, deepening self-awareness, envisioning the possible (ethnic & social) journey with the goal in sight. I know that I will revisit this roadmap either alone or with this group to maintain my focus on the journey.
• The continuation of your acceptance—there was a moment of fear as I passed my very personal roadmap at the first meeting—until I realized it was in the hands of a very trusted critical friend.

• Be courageous in my conversation with staff.
• AWESOME activity; very reflective; some of my experiences were brought to them to the surface; appreciated the sharing of other ideas that allows me the opportunity to see what shaped/shapes perspectives on race, equity…can use this with my staff.

As we come to the close of another school year we are pressing forward with our focus on race and equity by filtering next year’s planning through the lens presented by Singleton and Linton’s opening questions:

What is it that [we] educators should know and be able to do to narrow the racial achievement gap?

How will [we] educators know when [we] are experiencing success in [our] efforts to narrow the racial achievement gap?

What will [we] do as [we] discover what [we] don’t yet know and are not yet able to do to eliminate the racial achievement gap?

As part of our efforts, we are moving the text-based conversation into our schools and leadership teams and reconsidering the shape and design of our seminar and workshop agendas.

Organizationally, we are taking a long view of our work and our ability to sustain it over time: we need to be ready to roll out a campus-wide campaign to partner with a university or universities in the coming years. As budgets become tighter, our schools need outside support to fund the learning and practice of collaborative learning communities in the Philadelphia area. To date we have, and have had, case-by-case university support of specific seminars and retreats developed through grants, our personal networks and our job-related roles. We need a sustained plan of action to develop a university-based and funded Center of Continuing Education for Critical Friends with the possibility of college credit and research support. University support would also allow us to reach out to students and family members in our efforts to extend community membership to the nonprofessional stakeholders, who are at the center of our work. We welcome the feedback of our colleagues in NSF who have already developed successful university partnerships.

For more information, or to offer your feedback, please write to Debbie Bambino at dbambino@earthlink.net.

every day. We practiced distributive leadership: we changed team leaders every two months. I began to teach a course called Student Work (USW) protocols with my team. I used a Collaborative Assessment Conference (CAC) protocol with my teaching team and the students after I experienced it at a conference where my student’s work was used. I began to use a variety of protocols in my classroom and I taught the students the Connections protocol as a process for beginning our classes. We did not do Connections everyday, but the students learned to ask for Connections and they learned to facilitate it as well. I also took Socratic Seminar training and began to use this process too. My classes met in a circle with lots of open space and conference tables instead of desks. I had lots of visitors coming to see what we were doing.

I began working with teachers in Philadelphia in the summer. Jackie Simmons hired me to go to Paul Robeson High School in Chicago to train teachers in CFC work. It was usually Faith Dunn, Gene Thompson-Grove, Carol LaCerenza and me. Race became an issue in Philadelphia because two black female teachers felt they weren’t willing to do this work in the summer if race was not an issue. I spoke up at that point and reassured them that race would be part of the conversation. This was in 1993-94. We read articles I was familiar with, and had courageous conversations about race.

I went to different programs and materials we used were designed by suburban white women to read articles I was familiar with, and had courageous conversations about race.

I also became involved with the NSF contract to do Knowledge Works in Ohio, (The Center for Excellence in Leadership for Learning) in Indianapolis, and was doing different CFG trainings around the country.

I was asked to be on the Accountability Council (2001-2005). I accepted the position in order to continue speaking up and speaking out on issues of equity but I often felt disliked, like I was being tolerated…as if they didn’t really want to hear what I was raising.

Being part of the development and ongoing co-facilitation CFE work across difference was and is a great highlight of my work.

What have been the biggest challenges?

CFE started in a promising way, with a laser focus on equity, but it has not taken hold. I sometimes think we’ve strayed to identify the differences between National Facilitators of color and
white facilitators—afraid to dig down and experience the discomfort that will allow us to truly grow as adults. In order for CFG, as an organization, to be not yet willing to be in Discourse II.

How does who you are inform what you do within this work?

My voice developed all through this work. I had a sense of voice from my own private school educa-
tional experience, and was convinced that public schools didn’t work for kids, and everything since has confirmed this. It’s a systemic failure, not a “kid” failure.

My focus is to be in Discourse II and to be a National Facilitator who is African-American. I take pride in who I am and how I enter a room. Some black people feel they have to protect white people. I’m not in this work to scare people, but I’m not here to protect myself or others either. I feel that each (dominant-culture people and non-dominant-culture people) have our own work to do in order to form alliances across our difference to more effectively bring about change for the least successful high school students caught in a hegemonic system of education.

How do you feel NSF can best “live” its mission and vision?

Every time race is mentioned, people on the (NSRF) listserv rush to make each other feel comfort-
able. In my opinion, the listserv is not a space for courageous conversation around race, class or gen-
der issues, but a space to exchange cognitive ideas about protocols. I think we need to focus on ways to build ali-
ance and address differences in intentional ways. We are still not an unapologetically equity-based organiza-
tion. We need to be able to hold a space in which emergent and multiple lenses can coexist.

For instance, time and time again NSF is invited by a district to do CFG training. Even when the district asks for equity to be at the center of the CFG, there is a lot of conversation among National Facilitators about how to proceed, and I often won-
der if our own individual discomfort about holding the space for tough conversations about equity deter-
mines our assessment of what the participants want or need in their trainings.

All I know is that there is a clear pathway from high school to prison for black boys in urban high schools. I do not think we have the luxury of consid-
ering my own comfort. I choose to stand in the
risk and danger zone with those who are dying.

The answers to the question of what a National Facilitator should be able to do but was written in Discourse II. Too often in national NSF work, I’ve felt alone in my efforts to hold the space for discussions on equity, even when I am paired with another NSF facilitator. All facilitators should be “trained” to have discussions in Discourse II and trained to hold space for Discourse II discussions. How do we frame this work to work across differ-
ence in Discourse II? How do we have folks under-
stand they have to work from the inside out, know their own prejudices, be able to interrupt when it’s called for? We need people who can build alliances across difference and hold space for difficult conver-
sations. I would like to see that language in what it means to be a National Facilitator.

What are the obstacles to this?

Historically, NSF is an organization comprised of mostly dominant-culture folks. In my opinion, most dominant-culture folks have a big fear of being called racist and they need to get over it. There is a fear of Discourse II. Most people like sanitized,Discourse I language, the language that makes everyone feel comfortable. Discourse II is about being uncomfortable. When most white people begin to feel uncomfortable, most are struggling with their own guilt. White people who feel guilty or who are stuck in guilt are useless in equity-based work. Uncomfortable conversations about race often lead to feelings of guilt, feelings we all need to work through, otherwise we get stuck in ignorance….we can’t do anything if we don’t work past the guilt. I know I have work to do. I have guilt and I possess biases. I need to continue to publicly declare my biases and guilt and invite others to do the same. If we as adults cannot take the bold and courageous steps necessary to interrupt inequitable practices, how will each child thrive?

What’s your greatest hope for NSF in the next period?

I hope that NSF becomes the “go to” organiza-
tion, the people who make room at the table for each underserved student and the families and staff members who advocate for them.

Camilla Greene believes in “speaking our truth, staying in Discourse II” in all her work across difference and hold space for difficult conver-
sations. I would like to see that language in what it means to be a National Facilitator.

How did you first become involved in NSF?

My NSF work really evolved from CES/Coalition of Essential Schools work. I taught at a CES high school (Rippowam High School in Stamford, CT) from 1984 to 2002. I was drawn to the then Nine Common Principles, especially “Student as Worker” (see www.

essentialschools.org). I wanted to “de-teach-erize” my classroom and be seen as more of a resource to my students. Two teachers from Walbrook High School in Baltimore, Marion Finney and Dot Turner, did a workshop at my school and that was the first time I’d ever seen African American women doing profes-
sional development. Their presence grew out of a Casey Foundation grant and their teaching of Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh. These conversations were given the

Common Principles towards CES membership. As a result of this experience I applied to become a CES facilitator in 1992. My superinten-
dent and principal were very supportive of releas-
ing me to work with other teachers. The focus of the CES work was to professionalize teaching with-
out having to leave the classroom. It was a cerebral experience. I tried to raise equity issues during my time in my classroom and they were pushed under the rug.

Can you say more about how the discussion of equity issues was “pushed under the rug”? We (myself and about 25 Cibithan teachers) were pulled together in Chicago in 1993 by Paula Evans and Gene Thompson-Crowe and asked what we talked about in substantive conversations. I believe this (conversation) grew into CFG work eventually. Lati Camilla Greene can be contacted at camillagreene@att.net, and Mary Hastings can be reached at mhastings@greatschoolspartnership.org.

Camilla Greene: I’m not in this work to scare people, but I’m not here to make each other feel comfort-
able. In my opinion, the listserv is not a space for
discussion about race, class or gender. We had intention-
al provocative conversations as a whole staff based on texts like Other People’s Children, by E. Christian

White. Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh. These conversations were given the time and space to develop every other month. We also incorporated block scheduling, and training across disciplines with planning time every day. Rippowam High School had 300 to 400 students. We visited other schools practicing CES principles.

I began using CFG practices with my team.

So what happened?

Nothing. In hindsight, we should have included parents in the conversation, but we did not. Parents in general, but especially working-class parents and parents of color, are still missing from most depth-level conversations. The Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) and some other small school design teams are beginning to open up the process to family members.

In what capacities have you found yourself using CFG work over the years?

My high school evolved under the leadership of a female principal, Kay Reddy. Reddy’s school district was about 44% African American and Latino and 52% white. Dr. Meltzer, the principal at our CES high school, had a vision for educating each student regardless of race, class or gender. Under her leadership we dealt with our own equity issues as a staff. We had many tough and courage-
gous conversations about race. We had intention-
ally provocative conversations as a whole staff based on texts like Other People’s Children, by E. Christian

White. Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh. These conversations were given the time and space to develop every other month. We also incorporated block scheduling, and training across disciplines with planning time every day. Rippowam High School had 300 to 400 students. We visited other schools practicing CES principles.

I began using CFG practices with my team.
Protocols in Practice:  
The Triple Chalk Talk- An Alternative Way to “Set It Off”  
Roleisia Holman, North Carolina

I 
explicitly recalling having a conversation with Nancy Mohr when she, Katy Kelly and I par-  
ticipated in the Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools’ (BayCES) Leading for Equity seminar in the summer of 2004. I remember thinking, it seems like a perfect marriage… if we could inte-  
grate BayCES’s equity pedagogy with the processes and protocols of NSRF. Lo and behold, it wasn’t  
long afterward that the work began with a few of our National Facilitators and BayCES colleagues, 
work that launched the Coaching for Educational Equity (CFEE) Seminar in the summer of 2005. 
This particular arti- 
cle is intended to put  

… if we could inte-  
...
Getting to the questions
My input for changing our choice of ques-
tions was interjected into a meeting I had with B. Delpit, where she recommended that I read her article Educators as “Seed People” Growing a New Future. This article was coupld with our CFE reading of The Nature of Discourse(s) in Education (aka Changing the Discourse in Schools) by Eugene Fahsels, Ralph Parish and Diane Smith. After mul-
tiple readings and discussions, I questioned what, then, the difference is between Delpit’s defini-
tion of “education” vs. “schooling,” and Fahsels, Parish and Smith’s discourses of traditional talk and schooling that perpetuates and propagates “social reproduction” vs. transformation- what is vs. what could be? Justsposed between these two constructs, the critical question we had to then ask was- “What is equity?” After we interrogated our assump-
tions and beliefs and interrupted inequities, how do we begin to transition and ultimately transform our-
sele, in order to transform others? Possing these three questions:
• What is schooling?
• What is education?
• What is equity?
just might get us to a point of challenging not just etymologies, but also educators’ understanding and manifestation of these beliefs in schools, benefiting students and their families and, consequently, society.

Testing out Triple Chalk Talk
I connected to transformation and not simply reproduce unsuccessful high schools on a smaller scale! As some of us began to wrestle with the questions ourselves, we were amazed at the dis-
sonance that it caused within each of us and among the participants, and at the revelation that what they were doing in their schools that would eventually only get them to the same results as the schools they sought to change.
The mere suggestion of changing the structure and content of the Chalk Talk was met with some trepidation. Because we were an “out of the box” and mixed group of facilitators across difference, we agreed to take the risk and support each other in the facilitation and debrief of the process. The Triple Chalk Talk afforded us the opportu-
nity to get participants’ thoughts on the landscape, inviting them to grapple with common terms in uncommon ways in order to assess where they were as we began the journey of identification, inter-
ruption, transition and transformation. Rigorous, yes. Relationships- we asked ourselves and our participants what the relationships were in the three terms, and also what the relevance was of posing the three questions within the context of our seminar and their schools. These questions were asked in the debrief and we’ve always been surprised at the outcome. We often times stood in angst, confusion, enlightenment and clariication with more questions- a deeper reflection on prac-
tice in schools- and a yearning for ways to truly create something radically different, not only for the students and parents, but also for the educators who yearned for greater satisfaction in what they were doing for their students and school communi-
ties.
On facilitation...
I also learned that the facilitators’ rationale for using this protocol with these questions should be made clear before it is implemented. Depending upon the purpose for using Chalk Talk, it can be counterproductive, or an escape route for address-
ing equity supercicially, if it is only intended to be used as a “silenced” dialogue. If the equity dialogue isn’t unpacked and connected to other curricular components to deepen understandings throughout the seminar, it is insufcient- and dare I say irresponsible. To open and shut the dialogue at the Chalk Talk. For those of us who want to hide behind their discomfort in pressing for public conversa-
tions about the issues that beset the poor, the mar-
ginalized, children of color and other victims of bias and discrimination, it can be a way to bring it up” without “taking it up.” While there’s safety and anonymity in the Chalk Talk, it does a disser-
tance to simply create silent spaces to name inequi-
ties without the proper curricular connections and skilled facilitation to allow participants to verbalize their thoughts and feelings that surface as a result of “doing the protocol”; without then creating and holding the space to un-silence the dialogue.
Another point that may seem minor to some says a lot! I watched the Triple Chalk Talks play out, I began to notice that while they happened in differing locales, the questions repeatedly ended up being placed in a similar order. First and/or second were the questions “What is education?” and “What is schooling?” usually placed in close proximity to one another. Then, in another distant space, (continued on page 19)

Winter Meeting Wrap-Up
Sarah Childers, Indiana

I n December, nearly 300 teachers, educational leaders, school administrators and researchers gathered in Tampa, Florida, for the 12th Annual NSRF Winter Meeting. Participants hailed from all over, coming from as far away as Washington State, Maine and even China to take part in NSRF’s largest annual event. Thanks to our partnership with the Lastinger Center for Learning, University of Florida and our Florida Center of Activity, we also welcomed more than a third of our total partici-
pants from Florida, a state where NSRF work is becoming a staple of the professional development work of many schools and districts.

Following the Introduction, several sessions complemented the proceedings, and you can look for them to again precede the next Winter Meeting.

One new feature of the Winter Meeting with a wel-
come from our Director, Steven Stull, and an ener-
gizing presentation that personalized some of NSRF’s core beliefs about teaching and learning. Ms. Gloria Merriex and her class of fifth graders came all the way from Dade County Public Schools, as our keynote speaker. He closed out our meet-
ing with an inspirational speech (tran-
script and video online) that set the charge for participants on their way home to continue their work and learning, for the sake of students.

Due to a big winter storm moving in, most par-
ticipants who had planned to stay for the scheduled Centers Council Meeting Saturday afternoon had to leave, so the meet-
ing was cancelled. (continued on page 17)
In This Issue
Debbie Bambino, Pennsylvania

Connections
Here at Connections, we are going to press as we prepare for the close of another school year, turn our thoughts to the design of summer institutes, and yet another new beginning in the fall. In this issue, Steven Strull and Peggy Silva invite us to eavesdrop on their ongoing conversation about Center of Activity membership in the Director’s Report. Mary Hastings interviews Camilla Greene for NSSE’s Living History. We learn from Julie Lindsay about efforts to embed CFG practices at the Shanghai American School and Debbie Bambino gives us a glimpse of the ongoing work of our Pennsylvania Center of Activity.

Susan Schoeler reviews Still Separate and Unequal: Segregation and the Future of Urban School Reform and the author’s documentation of the failure of the possibility that was Brown vs. Board of Education. Camilla Greene shares her review of the Warrior Method: A Parents’ Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys, and wonders why educators seem more concerned with subduing rather than empowering their black, male students.

A student shares her experience visiting her mother in prison in our Students at the Center piece, and Greg Peters asks us to think together about how much we know of our students’ lives after the last period of the day. Ross Peterson-Veatch sums up our recent Research Forum and invites all of us to take our membership in the Director’s Report. Mary Hastings, Maine 5

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Research Forum Report Ross Peterson-Veatch, Indiana 9

Invite, Include, Inspire Scott Hutchinson, Indiana 9

Students at the Center: Sunday Morning Zoe W., California 10

CFGs in Shanghai Julie Lindsay, China 12

Connections is a journal of the National School Reform Faculty, a division of Harmony Education Societies that includes an annotated bibliography of books for black boys grades 1-6. If you are interested in The Warrior Method to anyone, whether he or she be a parent, grandparent, educator or concerned citizen, who wants to read a thoughtful guide to developing the fullest capacity of each black boy.

Camilla Greene can be contacted at camillagreene@lat.net

Still Separate and Unequal (continued from page 7)

was the question “What is equity?” I had to ask in our debrief—how is it that “equity” is placed at the end, remotely hanging away from the other questions, as an afterthought? Is it coincidence, or is it symbolic of how equity itself is usually attended to? After the other definitions were unpacked, equity was tacked on to the tail end of our days or added as a secondary or lesser component of our agendas. It is the topic we think we should discuss, but because we feel less competent addressing it, because of the messiness, difficulty, and lack of confidence that we sometimes feel when holding space for this volatile dialogue, it goes at the very end, sometimes in the hope that time will not allow us to get to it.

That needed to change, and so I changed it. Taking a strategic and more proactive approach, sometimes I will place it in the middle question, and at other times I reserve changing its location until later in the week to emphasize or punctuate the importance of equity as the missing puzzle piece that can move us from “too much schooling, too little education” (See Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies by Mwalimu J. Shujaa) to what is required to meet the needs of each student in order to improve academic achievement.

Therefore, the sequence of questioning toward the end of the seminar (and hopefully, participants arrive at this conclusion themselves) becomes: if we operate from the premise that schools are designed to “school” students (see The Historic Timeline of Public Education, www.ahem.org) and we truly embrace equity, then it is our responsibility and hopefully our passion to create the conditions and circumstances in our educational environments to give each student what he/she needs by providing the essential and crucial inputs—i.e equity in human, capital and financial resources needed to reach them well, empower them and liberate them so that they can achieve at high levels. If we choose to, we can truly educate them and enable them to make positive contributions to our local, national and global communities. In Teaching to Transgress, bell hooks says that education is the practice of freedom. How else can we become a truly democratic society?

Dr. Winbush challenges any adult wanting to nourish and successfully engage black boys to know and practice the 4 Cs: Consciousness, Commitment, Cooperation, and Community. The book includes an annotated bibliography of books for black boys grades 1-6. If you are interested in The Warrior Method to anyone, whether he or she be a parent, grandparent, educator or concerned citizen, who wants to read a thoughtful guide to developing the fullest capacity of each black boy.

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Protocols in Practice
(continued from page 15)

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Connections: the Journal of the National School Reform Faculty
Spring 2008
Director's Report  Steven Strull, Director, with Peggy Silva, New Hampshire

As a participant grappling with the proposed new fee-based membership structure at the membership summit in Houston last year, Peggy Silva, NSRF National Facilitator and writing coordinator at Souhegan High School, expressed her belief that there should be an institutional membership category that would allow individual schools to align with the work of the national organization using their own internal structures to further the work. Although the NSRF declined to consider an institutional membership in its initial membership offering, Director Steven Strull agreed to consider Souhegan’s perspective for the first year of this new fee-based membership. Steven and Peggy decided to share their perspectives in Connections, as part of this issue’s Director’s Report, and are inviting others to comment.

Peggy Silva: CFGs serve as the foundation of professional development at Souhegan High School in Amherst, New Hampshire. All 120+ members of our professional staff and administrators, and over 30 members of our support staff, are members of CFGs, meeting monthly during a two-hour delayed opening. Our CFGs provide support to our Career Growth Process, the R & D branch of our professional development. We are a CFG school, and have been for many years. We have trained most of our own coaches, and our three National Facilitators sponsor annual training. We provide three days of training each year for our coaches, and send coaches to the NSRF Winter Meeting, some of whom serve as facilitators. Our National Facilitators attend NSRF meetings throughout the year and we provide articles for NSRF Connections. Yet now, despite an extraordinary commitment to this organization, we find ourselves in a dilemma with NSRF. Our organizational structure requires approximately 15 trained coaches to support our CFGs. Although we are a Center of Activity, our primary work is internal. We rely on the expertise, the research, and the professional collegiality of the national organization to augment our work and to maintain our focus. We are willing to pay for that, in the same way that we pay for our association with the Coalition of Essential Schools, another value-based organization. CES charges Souhegan an annual institutional membership fee as a school-based member of the Coalition. For the fee, Souhegan enjoys the cachet of belonging to a reform-based organization, and the opportunity to learn from others who share the same core beliefs.

As part of its shift to a dues-paying membership organization, NSRF has asked each of our coaches to join NSRF as a contributing member. As a school community, we have decided to support our coaches by paying for their participation in national meetings, by paying a stipend to our coaches, and by sponsoring and paying for their ongoing training. Our school has worked with our school board to get the time for us to work together on this essential professional development. Our National Facilitators, however, benefit in their ability to charge a fee for training others, and so our school asks them to pay for their individual membership in NSRF; we are not asking for them to be included in our school-based membership.

As a public high school here in the Live Free or Die state, we also have a very pragmatic concern about paying a contributing member (continued on page 12)
Protocols in Practice: The Triple Chalk Talk - An Alternative Way to “Set It Off”
Roesia Holman, North Carolina

Explicitly recalling having a conversation with Nancy Mohr when she, Katy Kelly and I participated in the Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools’ (BayCES) Leading for Equity seminar in the summer of 2004, I remember thinking, it seems like a perfect marriage… if we could integrate BayCES’s equity pedagogy with the processes and protocols of NSRF, Lo and behold, it wasn’t long after that the work began with a few of our National Facilitators and BayCES colleagues, work that launched the Coaching for Educational Equity (CFEE) Seminar in the summer of 2005. This particular article is intended to put to paper some thoughts that were emerging around an NSRF process, Chalk Talk; content that emerged from CFEE as a result of the partnership with BayCES; and the Gates Foundation’s attributes of high-achieving schools, rigor, relevance and relationships—of those involved in the national Small Schools movement.

As we sought to create agendas for those who were interested in professional learning communities that were a radical departure from business as usual, we knew that in order to create change, we had to research, adopt, and implement critical pedagogy and practices that were engaging and potentially transformative. As a group, we wanted to share our collective experiences from working around the national Small Schools movement. As part of the Triple Chalk Talk, we also wanted to grapple with processes and content that would deepen our practice and intensify the experiences of those who passionately wanted to explore new small schools, after a year or two, began to look very much like many others. From our collective observations and data compiled from national and local reports on school achievement, most new high schools were turning out to be miniature replicas of large comprehensive high schools with minimal changes in performance results or adult/student relationships. Having the experiences of serving as a director of creating new small schools, advocating for them and coaching in them, I took the liberty of putting my own spin on what we conventionally know as the Chalk Talk.

Chalk Talk: its purpose was clear and familiar to many—a way to bring to the surface what participants actually believe and challenge them to think differently about how to redesign learning environments so that they would yield a different set of results for students who had been neither compliant nor appropriately involved in school. As most educators do, we went with what we knew, but allowed ourselves to be challenged to be far more rigorous and increase the experiences that would stretch us and the participants. We shared with each other our individual and collective experiences from working around the country, where we witnessed various attempts at starting new small schools. Unfortunately, we saw that most new small schools, after a year or two, other group I have ever been a part of! I plan to do this work at my school. I think this is a great way to look at and learn from student work.

Cool
• I would like more “nuts and bolts” information/resources about how to implement SLCs in your small high school. The thought was to ask not just one question, but three that would cause people to enter a space of dissonance—dissonance that was intended to direct us inward and call to the fore that which was both personal and professional, cognitive and emotional.

Reflection quotes:
Warm
• Our facilitators did an excellent job of meeting all needs of our group.
• Incredible! This was an unbelievably relevant and productive conference.
• Thank you for bringing in Gloria Merriex. She was quite an inspiration. What an amazing “giver” she is.
• We worked together more deeply than any other group I have ever been a part of.
• I plan to do this work at my school. I think this is a great way to look at and learn from student work.

Instead, those of us who remained met to debrief the meeting and discuss plans for the next Winter Meeting.

The 2009 Winter Meeting, which will be our lucky 13, will be held in Texas, where we will be hosted by no fewer than three NSRF Centers of Activity—Houston ISD for the Chinese New Year Break Challenge, The Urban Forum for Leadership and Learning/Houston Independent School District, and San Antonio NSRF Center at Trinity University. We look forward to seeing you all again next January!

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Winter Meeting Wrap-Up (continued from page 3)

Shanghai American School
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13th Annual NSRF Winter Meeting
Houston, Texas
January 15th-17th, 2009

more for information, visit: www.nsrfharmony.org/wintermeeting.html

year fatigue to be with their groups. Similarly, this fall the school superintendent proposed a program based on CFG protocols for all middle-school leaders. This developed into our ITF (Teacher Facilitator Training) program. The TFI was designed to provide two- to three-day training for all teacher leaders to become facilitators of CFG protocols for all school meetings and collaboration on every team across the school. The intent of this program was to initiate a kind of systemic CFG presence across the school to provide equity, voice, and effectiveness in meetings at every level. I cannot help but be disappointed that the essential work of teachers sharing their teaching practices and strategies in the context of comfort-able community circles is not moving forward as quickly as I would like. I am encouraged, however, by the positive reactions of many of my colleagues as they are exposed to the protocols in areas like full faculty meetings, key accreditation committees involving parents, admin, and teachers, as well as developing programs like teacher assistant training, parent education groups, and high school student associations. That’s not to say that we have found no resistance to the use of protocols, but what began as an October cohort of 15 participants is moving into a scope of acceptance and use across an organization of hundreds. Indeed, as we get ready to go back to school after the Chinese New Year break, I feel that, by and large, the majority of teachers in this faculty of about 300 are feeling the community building power of the conversations that emerge around CFG protocols bring to their professional lives.

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