

## Striving for Excellence...

*Do we truly  
want  
the best  
schools  
we've ever  
had?*



*No longer can we say -  
well, we just don't know where to start -*

*or what to do.*

*Now it's just 'Get 'er Done'!*

– Mike Schmoker,

KSDC 2007 Fall Institute Keynote Speaker



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## Calendar Countdown

### Putting NSDC Standards Into Practice

June 25, 2007

8:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m.

Lawrence, KS

### NSDC Institute

August 6-7, 2007

#### Powerful Designs for Professional Learning

Joellen Killion

Marriott Country Club Plaza  
Kansas City, MO

### KSDC/KASCD Fall Institute

October 23-24, 2007

#### Stepping Up to 2014

...and Beyond

Keynote: Mike Schmoker

Wichita Airport Hilton

### KSDC Spring Conference

February 6-7, 2008

#### Making the Connection with Staff Development

Keynote: Stephanie Hirsh

Preconference February 5

#### Active Literacy

Heidi Hayes Jacobs

Wichita Airport Hilton

## KSDC Board Meetings

### Board Advance

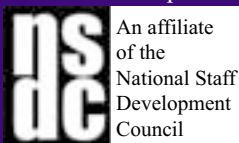
June 13-14, 2007

The Barn

Valley Falls, KS

See [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us) for more information on all these events.

Direct Connection is a publication of the Kansas Staff Development Council



## President's Column

# 'Fish'ing For Successful Leaders

By Jill Smith  
KSDC President

This is my last article as KSDC President so I was trying to determine what words of wisdom I could leave you with that would be useful. When I read professionally, I always try to pull out information that can be applied and implemented into practice. A colleague of mine spoke to my Baker

class about the *Fish!* Philosophy and I was intrigued. I had heard about this book, but had never picked it up and decided that now was the time. *Fish!*

(2000) is written by Stephen C. Lundin, Harry Paul and John Christensen. During my transition to a new position last year, I thought I could really use some new ideas and **THIS WAS IT!** The *Fish!* philosophy was developed after experiencing Seattle's Pike Place Fish, a fish market, and is based on four principles:

1. **Choose your attitude.** The key question here is: Who do we want to be while we do our work?
2. **Play.** How could we have more fun and create more energy?



3. **Make Their Day.** Who are our customers and how can we engage them in a way that will make their day? How could we make each other's day?

4. **Be Present.** What can we do to be present for each other and our customers?

These principles helped guide me to strongly consider staff morale and stressed the importance of what I could do to put these ideas into place. This led to further team building activities, notes/candy in mailboxes, listening with an active ear and closed mouth, and always trying to

be positive in approaching new situations. I have found that by being more "in-tune" to the *Fish!* philosophy, I have become a better leader. I approach each day as an opportunity.

Having said that, I feel I have fulfilled Reed Markham's quote, "*Successful leaders see the opportunities in every difficulty, rather than the difficulty in every opportunity.*"

Good luck on creating an environment full of opportunities! ■

## Looking for a gift for an education graduate?



**Give the gift** of continued learning  
**Give the gift** that brings opportunities for professional networking  
**Give the gift of membership to KSDC**

*No trip to the store*  
*No gift wrapping required...*

Just download an application form from the Membership section of the KSDC website, [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us)

## KSDC 2008 Spring Conference

# Making The Connection Through Staff Development

By Geri Parscale  
2008 Spring Conference Chair

Today's world demands that learners increase their capacity for learning on a daily basis. Never has it been more important to continue looking for tools to help us meet the demands of a radically and rapidly changing society. The Spring 2008 KSCD Conference will help do just that!

The KSDC 2008 Spring Conference, *Making the Connection Through Staff Development*, will be held at the Wichita Airport Hilton Hotel, with the pre-conference being held February 5 and the main conference February 6-7.

### Pre-Conference

The pre-conference speaker, Heidi Hays Jacobs, will address "Active Literacy to Increase Student Learning" in every classroom, grades K-12. Dr. Jacobs will speak to improving and

sustaining student performance over time.

### Main Conference

The Keynote Speaker will be Stephanie Hirsh, deputy executive director of the National Staff Development Council. Hirsh will address improvement of student learning by ensuring all educators in all schools experience high quality professional learning every day. She will also lead a breakout session speaking to the responsibility we all have to share knowledge of the fundamentals of staff development.

### Share Your Expertise

KSDC is in need of proposals for our breakout sessions, to be presented



February 6 and 7. Please plan to submit a proposal for this 2008 spring conference and share your expertise with others, helping others to **Make The Connection!** Conference proposals can be submitted online at [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us). Proposals are due September 14. **Mark your calendar and we will see you in February!** ■

## SUMMER HAPPENING To Focus On Standards In Action

By Sandee Crowther  
KSDC Executive Director

Attendees at the KSDC/ISDC Summer Happening will focus on "Putting NSDC Standards into Practice." The happening will be held Monday, June 25, 8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. at the Lawrence Public Schools, 110 McDonald. Linda Munger, Iowa Staff Development Council (ISDC) Executive Director, and Sandee Crowther, KSDC Executive Director, will present the workshop.

NSDC has organized by role groups (i.e., teachers, principals, central office staff, superintendent, etc.) what the twelve standards for professional development look like in action. Participants will determine their current level of implementation of the standards for professional development. The results from each practice profile (Innovation Configuration maps) will be used to create an action plan for making changes in key areas with a  
*May 2007*

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*The NSDC Standards address  
the often-asked question,*

**"What are the best approaches  
for successful staff development?"**

---

focus on a small number of standards, planning appropriate interventions to reach higher levels of quality professional development, and building capacity to create more effective professional development

Cost for the happening is \$75.00.

Register online at [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us) after March 1. Deadline for registration is June 15. For hotel reservations, call: Lawrence Holiday Inn, 200 McDonald Drive (785) 841-7077. Rate is \$69 for a single or double room, if made by June 15. ■

### NSDC Institute

*Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*

**Presented by: Joellen Killion, NSDC Director of Special Projects**

Understand the connection between Professional Learning and Student Achievement using the Backmapping model

*August 6-7, 2007*

*Kansas City Marriott Country Club Plaza*

*Registration form at: [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us)*



# Look First At The **Brutal Facts**, Then Improve Instruction With A Focus On Four Areas

By Sue Kidd  
KSDC Past President

*Ouch, the truth hurts!*

I've heard about Dr. Mike Schmoker, and even read his early books, but I had just never had the opportunity to hear him. I was looking forward to his keynote presentation at the NSDC Conference, held last December in Nashville, TN. I did not expect it to be so straightforward.

The opening question was: "Do we TRULY want the best schools we've ever had?"

If we do then Schmoker says we must face the **Brutal Facts**.

- Only about 50% of students who enter college ever graduate – primarily because K-12 does not prepare most of them for college. (Haycock; Conley)
- About 7% of low-income students will ever earn a college degree. (Haycock)
- Only 32% of our college-bound students are adequately prepared for college. ("Understanding University Success", Center for Educational Policy Research)

So, what is the single factor having the largest impact on achievement levels and college readiness/graduation?

- The "Teacher Effect" makes all other differences pale in comparison. (William Sanders)
- Five years of effective teaching can completely close the gap between low-income students and others. (Marzano; Kain & Hanushek)

For all of our initiatives, programs and plans, we do not inspect:

1. What is actually taught (essential standards), *or*
2. How well material is taught (effective lessons/units) (Gordon; Elmore; Marzano; Tyack & Cuban; Hess; Berliner).

"So: First things first!" Schmoker

advised. "Improve Instruction."

In order to make improvements, Schmoker suggested a focus on four areas.

1. Replace "Improvement Planning" with a focus on improving teaching through **professional learning communities**.
2. Institute a **"guaranteed & viable curriculum."**
3. Demystify **leadership**.
4. Start with high-leverage opportunities, particularly in the area of **literacy instruction**.

Schmoker went on to delve further into each of these areas.



### Learning Communities

- "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community." (Milbrey McLaughlin)
- Teams are data-driven focusing on academic priorities and guided by SMART Goals.

### Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum

- This is the number one factor that increases levels of learning. (Marzano; Porter; Lazotte)

### Leadership

"Direct involvement in instruction is among the least frequent activities performed by administrators of any kind at any level." (Richard Elmore 2000)

- Monitor instruction of a guaranteed and viable curriculum.



- Support team management and coordinate support for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Celebrate "small wins!"

### Literacy Instruction

"Under-developed literacy skills are the number one reason why students are retained, assigned to special education, given long-term remedial services and why they fail to graduate from high school." (Ferrandino and Tirozzi: Presidents of NAESP and NASSP)

- Writing is the litmus paper of thought...the very center of schooling. (Ted Sizer)
- Writing aids in cognitive development to such an extent that the upper reaches of Bloom's taxonomy could not be reached without the use of some form of writing. (Kurt and Farris, 1990)

### Schmoker's Bottom Line

Swift, dramatic improvement, in other words a 35-50 percentile gain in three years has been documented to occur when the following are present: (Marzano; Sanders)

- **Team-based** Professional Learning Communities!
- **Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum**
- **Radical** changes to literacy instruction

"No longer can we say – well, we just don't know where to start – or what to do. Now it's just 'GET 'ER DONE!'" Schmoker concluded. ■



## Conference To Focus On Getting Results Now In The Area Of Improved Student Achievement

By Jim Karleskint  
Fall Institute Chair

The 2007 Fall Institute will challenge educators to continue “Stepping Up to 2014...and Beyond.” The institute, hosted jointly by KSDC and KASCD, will be held October 23-24 at the Hilton Wichita Airport Executive Conference Center in Wichita, KS.

### Day One

#### Lessons from Mike Schmoker

Mike Schmoker has worked on school and district improvement, assessment, curriculum and staff development as a central office administrator, as a senior consultant at McREL (Mid-Continent Regional



Mike Schmoker

Educational Laboratory), and now as an independent speaker and consultant. He is a former middle and high school English teacher and football coach.

Dr. Schmoker has written four books and numerous articles, which have appeared in *Educational Leadership*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Education Week* and *TIME* magazine. He recently published the book: **RESULTS NOW: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning.**

As the keynote speaker for the 2007 Fall Institute, Schmoker will focus on “First Things First: From ‘Brutal Facts’ to the Best Schools We’ve Ever Had.” His message will emphasize that principals who assess are instrumental

“We work in a system that does not give enough attention to simple things like,

**How effective is this lesson? How effective is this unit?**

Are supervisors, team leaders, teams of teachers themselves constantly asking the questions:

**Is there a common curriculum? Is the lesson effective?**

**Is the unit effective? What evidence do we have that it’s effective?**

If those questions were asked instead of so much else that goes on in the life of a school, we’d have vastly better schools.”

-- Mike Schmoker, **RESULTS NOW**

in improving teacher performance, and that teachers make all the difference in student achievement.

Find more information on Schmoker and his work at his website, <http://mikeschmoker.com>.

### Day Two

#### Successes from Kansas

Day two will be filled with breakout sessions led by Kansas educators who have worked successfully to get the results of improved student achievement. Each session will consist of interactive activities and ideas for practicing teachers, support staff, and administrators to take back to their district for implementation.

#### Registration Coming Soon

Registration will be online at [www.ksdc.us](http://www.ksdc.us) or via hard copy.

#### Daily Schedule

Continental Breakfast served each day from 8:00-8:30 a.m. with learning beginning at 8:30 a.m. Session will end at 4:00 p.m. on day one and at 2:30 p.m. on day two.

#### Lodging

Call the Hilton Airport hotel directly to make lodging arrangements (316-945-5272). A special rate of \$89. + tax per night can be received by mentioning KSDC. In order to obtain this rate, hotel reservations need to be made by October 1, 2007. ■

## Techie Tip

By Terry Eis  
KSDC Past President

Here’s one online resource that offers a powerful key for professional development.

[del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)

del.icio.us is a website that allows individuals to search by topic and will result in numerous excellent resources. The resulting sites can be tagged by identifiers selected by the user who then has them saved to his personal account for future reference and easy access. The user account can also be set to link to others who have similar interests. Linking to others allows for people to share new links and resources found through del.icio.us. ■





*KSDC Award Winner — Systemic Learning Award*

## Blue Valley USD 229 Centers Professional Development On Assessment For Learning, Curriculum Mapping, PLCs

By Walter Carter  
Director of Professional Development  
Blue Valley USD 229

During February 2007, all staff in Blue Valley USD 229 had the opportunity to attend a training session on Assessment for Learning. Each staff member spent 80 minutes with a trainer in a workshop setting. Based upon staff feedback following the October 2006

session, the training was designed to locate staff at tables in small discussion sessions. National speakers returned to Blue Valley as presenters in these sessions. Each presenter facilitated a discussion of the following topics:

- Understanding the types of achievement targets.
- Strategies for identifying achievement targets.
- Methods for making achievement

targets visible for students.

These sessions support the on-going curriculum mapping activities in the district. The curriculum mapping process asks educators to identify data about the essential content, skills and assessments that are found in every classroom in Blue Valley. By identifying achievement targets, each educator clarifies for students what they are to know and be able to do as the result of classroom learning. Quality assessments are linked to those essential learnings. Student achievement is enhanced when students become involved in their own assessments through frequent, descriptive teacher feedback, through the skills of self-assessment and finally through communication with others about their achievement status and improvement.

The District identified in the fall of 2006 that this was to be a year of study about research-based assessment practices. In the February session, we continued to build our knowledge and skills in on-going assessment practices designed to be Assessments for Learning as proposed by Dr. Rick Stiggins in his book, *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning*. These sessions were designed to lay the foundation of understanding for us and we anticipate the development of additional Assessments for Learning in the 2007-2008 school year. The district emphasis on assessment supports the Blue Valley commitment to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as we address the questions of Dr. Rick DuFour. For the past three years we have been focused on clearly answering these questions:

- What do we want students to learn?
- How will we know they have learned it?
- What are we going to do if they do not learn it?

The focus on Assessment for Learning helped staff answer the first two questions, and this work has produced higher levels of achievement across the district. ■



*KSDC Award Winner — Exemplary PLC*

## PLCs Build Professional Climate, Increase Student Achievement

Northview Elementary began our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) initiative in 2003-2004 with a very strategic plan of professional development. After attending a district inservice, Building Leadership Team members saw the value that PLCs could bring to our school community and student learning. With a strong foundation of data analysis and daily tutorial/enrichment instructional activities, we felt a need to involve all staff members in actively promoting student achievement. We outlined a three-year plan to involve PLCs in our building professional development and school philosophy.

Over the last three years, we have promoted professional development related to PLCs by aligning members of our support staff and specialists with specific grade level teams. Ongoing professional development has centered on the logistics of conducting PLCs, establishing norms, creating written agendas and instructional calendars, and reviewing data to design appropriate common assessments. At North-

view, our staff development occurs within monthly staff meetings, quarterly inservice trainings, regular faculty newsletters, and weekly scheduled PLC times. Furthermore, we continue to gain staff input and reflections to make adjustments to our plan according to individual staff needs.

Based on the success that we have experienced in terms of professional climate and student achievement, we are currently planning collaboration opportunities with other elementary schools in our district. We intend to share the positive impact on student achievement by presenting at the district level as well.

*Submitted by the Northview  
Elementary Building Leadership Team:*

- Amy Hercules, Principal
- Laura Martz, Co-Chair
- Cameo Robinson, Co-chair
- Brandi Michaelis
- Tiffany Eaves
- Dani Lybarger
- Debbie Stivers
- Kim Johnson ■

### LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS....

**Activities that support literacy**

*Ideas for energizing Professional Development*

**How to build a learning community**

*Answers to my questions about NCLB*

*Answers for these and so much more...*

<http://www.kansaslearningfirst.org>

To visit the topic of your choice go to "See it here" under "Tools for Quality Practice"



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## KSDC Mission

The Kansas Staff Development Council (KSDC) promotes high standards in student achievement by advocating, modeling, and providing resources for quality professional learning.

## KSDC Beliefs

### We believe:

- The ultimate purpose of staff development/professional learning is to improve student achievement.
- A staff developer is anyone who systematically empowers others to change their practice through professional learning.
- Effective staff developers use a research base to continually define and refine best practices.
- Effective collaboration is essential for our organization, quality staff development, and professional learning.
- Effective organizational development is required if all students are to learn.
- Organizational development requires individual change.
- Each educator has a moral responsibility to improve professional effectiveness through lifelong learning.
- Reinforcement and support systems are critical to the transfer of learning into practice.
- Ongoing assessment is critical for effective staff development decisions.

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## KSDC's Vision:

*The Kansas Staff Development Council (KSDC) will engage all Kansas educators in high quality professional learning by 2010.*



*KSDC Award Winner*  
*Exemplary PLC*  
**E2 = AYP2**

Dr. Becky Cheney  
Principal, Tescott Elementary

The Twin Valley School District Professional Development process has the characteristic components that, like many other school districts, align with the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) Standards. Meaningful, purposeful, professional development is a priority, both at the district level in USD 240 and at the building level in Tescott. In an effort to define our mission, the district level administrators, put our mathematical and creative heads together and came up with the equation:

**E2 = AYP2**

**Educational Excellence  
= Are You Performing**

This prevailing theme stayed with our school-based learning teams through many phases of:

- school improvement,
- professional development,
- instructional planning,
- assessment,
- examining student work, and

- solving problems.

When Tescott Elementary first implemented a school-wide guided reading program, weekly collaboration became the first component of our professional learning community. The term “professional learning community” (PLC) describes a collegial group of administrators and school staff who are united in our commitment to student learning. We share a vision, work and learn collaboratively, visit other classrooms, and participate in decision making. Technology integration and Kagan Cooperative Learning are strategies that support our reading goals. Weekly, we review data for decision-making purposes, look at best practice models, share information, demonstrate cooperative learning strategies, and study current research. Occasionally, we schedule presentations from reading consultants from our service center or special education cooperative.

Our guided reading program in combination with our home reading program is called OSCAR (**O**ur **S**chool **C**ares **A**bout **R**eadin**G**). We use the “Sesame Street” character “Oscar the Grouch” as our mascot. Students and teachers all have t-shirts that we wear

once a month for “OSCAR DAY”. We have a K-6 assembly on the morning of OSCAR DAY where students make reading presentations and spend time with recreational reading and reading activities. Success is celebrated, students are recognized, and awards are given. We believe part of learning includes having fun.

In addition to the weekly collaboration, our PLC meets regularly, either before or after school, to learn and practice technology skills that will enhance student learning. We are fortunate to have district support, where teachers not only receive PDC points, they are rewarded for in-house technology training by earning *Twin Bucks*. Teachers can use Twin Bucks to purchase items such as: projectors, cameras, jump drives, even I-pods!

Tescott Elementary was recently awarded a “Certificate of Merit”, as part of the 5th Annual Challenge Awards. This award recognizes schools across the state, for outstanding achievement based on assessment results from 2006 and other qualifying factors. This award exemplifies the important link between professional development and student achievement for the staff and students at Tescott. ■

## *Kansas Staff Development Council*

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