



Upcoming Trainings:

Powerful Learning & Literacy

Jan. 16- 17 – Austin

Powerful Learning II

Feb. 4- 5 – Austin

Powerful Learning I

Feb. 27 – 28 – Austin

Cadre Leader Follow-Up

Feb. 12 or 13 – Austin

Feb. 17 or 18 – Region I

Feb 17 or 18 – Dallas

Upcoming Meetings:

Principals & Coaches

Feb. 6-7, 2003

Coaches

Mar. 27-28, 2003

Coaches Wrap-Up

May 2003 (TBD)

5th Annual Conference:

Nov. 7-8, 2003 – Austin

Contact us at...

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for Accelerated Schools
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Austin, TX 78759

Phone: 512.232.0700

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For dates, trainings,
locations, registration
forms, research links, and
conference information
logon to our website [www.
swacceleratedschools.net](http://www.swacceleratedschools.net)

Practical Application of the Accelerated Schools Model in Environmental Science and IPC at the High School Level: "Growing and Building" by Oran Watson

My classes consist of 9th through 12th grade students, and span the entire social and economic spectrum. The majority are in the intervention program. We work diligently at Odessa High School to keep them progressing through the system.

The classes are Environmental Science and Integrated Physics and Chemistry. Both disciplines readily lend themselves to a lot of hands-on learning opportunities, as well as many situations that let the students think and develop projects that are in line with the curriculum. The response to the chance to "just do it" is generally very positive. Sometimes it takes a little time for some of the students to get it, but when they do, get out of the way or you'll get run over as they take charge of the experience.

In the Environmental Science course, I stress that the best thing that individuals can do to improve the quality of the air and water is to plant and grow things. Many of my students have never worked in the soil nor had the experience of getting their hands dirty. Once they get a chance to do this, enthusiasm is high especially when the crop comes up, and they can see the results of the effort.

Two of my classes have planted hard, red winter wheat in a couple of areas on the campus. The students did the land preparation, fertilizing, and planting. They also monitor the growth of the wheat, and irrigate it when necessary. Individual class members and groups of students are growing corn, wheat, grain sorghum, and soybeans in the lab. They do the preparation of the soil in the planters, a germination test of the seed, planting, fertilizing, and irrigating as the plants grow.

We spend a complete nine weeks period on water and water issues. The classes stress the importance of water conservation, the politics of water, water sources and development, and water as a component of economic development.

The students then develop their own project that must involve water. They must do a project, not a report. A project requires imagination, individual thought, and an expansion of knowledge to make the project work. The only requirements that I give are to use the scientific method as a guideline for selecting and developing their projects, and that the projects be tied to real world situations. *(cont. on page 4)*



Mr. Watson has taught IPC and Environmental Science at OHS for four years. Here, he is observing a lab sample of grain sorghum.

Highlights and Happenings

Looking for funding to expand Powerful Learning or to fund action plans?

Contact Bonnie Hamill for New American School grant information at 512.232.0701

Are your cadres ready to conduct research?

A great place to start is this link on our webpage...

"Cadre Web Research Sources"
continued on page 3

From the Director...

Holiday greetings to you,

This is a busy time of year for everyone. The school year is over and the holidays are approaching. The old expression, "The hurrier I go, the behinder I get" seems to apply.

We want to acknowledge Temple ISD for their successful Powerful Learning Lab this past June. It was a very energizing two-week learning experience for 200 elementary school students. Teachers from our Temple Accelerated Schools hosted teachers from Graham Elementary, Hackney Primary, Taylor Elementary, Rusk Elementary, Laneville Middle School, Walnut Creek Elementary, Bethune E.C., Garcia Elementary, and Raye-Allen Elementary. Some of the comments from participating teachers were "This camp put into reality what Accelerated Schools has been saying in theory;" "When students are interested in what they are learning, they are not discipline problems;" "It was very advantageous to have a variety of different teachers from different campuses to work with. We all had different perspectives and a variety of skills to offer." We are looking forward to establishing P. L. Labs in other areas of the state this coming summer.

Right after the start of the new year we will be presenting a two-day Powerful Learning and Literacy training. This will be followed with both Powerful Learning I and II sessions as well as cadre leader follow-up training in February and March.

Later this spring we will be visiting each of our Accelerated Schools campuses for a one-day site reflection visit. This gives us the opportunity to see first-hand the exciting work you have been doing.

Our 4th annual networking conference in November was a huge success with more than 300 participants. The breakout sessions were filled with practical powerful learning strategies. Thank you to all who presented. Of course we also appreciate the hard work of our coaches who worked with the presenters and were instrumental to the success of the conference.

Congratulations to our six Demonstrated Schools. Please see the related article on page 3. These six schools are living examples of the Accelerated Schools philosophy. I encourage you to visit them when you have the chance.

Finally, a warm welcome to our two newest network members, Murril Heights Elementary in El Dorado Arkansas and the Accelerated Intermediate Academy in Houston. Both schools joined the Project this summer. They are deeply involved in Taking Stock and beginning to implement Powerful Learning.

Joan, Dee, Ambrosio and I are looking forward to our visits to your campuses this Spring. In the meantime we are here to help you in any way that we can.



Bonnie's Book Club Recommendation:

You Have to Go to School - You're the Teacher!

250 classroom management strategies to make your job easier and more fun.

Renee Rosenblum-Lowden

Corwin Press, Inc.
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or call 805.499.9734

Feel free to duplicate this newsletter for all staff members, community partners, parent groups, and district personnel involved with **Accelerated Schools.**



Highlights and Happenings continued

This year six Accelerated Schools in the Southwest Center network met the National Accelerated Schools criteria for **Demonstrated Schools**.

These six schools provided empirical evidence and met the demonstrated criteria for implementation of the Accelerated Schools Project's principles, values, powerful learning, and governance process. With this designation, these schools are recommended sites for schools interested in visiting a campus that is effectively implementing the Accelerated Schools process.

At the annual conference, Bonnie Hamill presented each principal with a beautiful plaque signifying this outstanding achievement.



The schools and principals are:

Curtis Elementary

Weatherford ISD
David Belding, Principal

Hector P. Garcia Elementary

Temple ISD
Lydia Gaines, Principal

Haslet Elementary

Northwest ISD
Connie Finley, Principal

E.B. Reyna

La Joya ISD
Alma Ortega, Principal

Rio Costilla Elementary

Questa School District
Arlene Trujillo, Principal

Rodolfo Silva Elementary

Weslaco ISD
Luule Moreno, Principal

Great Idea!

Carl Pirkle, principal at Rusk Elementary, brought this anvil to school last spring. As students shared their dream schools, they would strike the anvil to signify they were helping to "forge the shared vision".

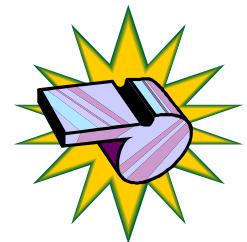


Coaches' Corner

Why, why, why, why, why?

Tips for Cadres

- ✓ Write the vision statement at the top of each agenda.
- ✓ Post chart of Inquiry Process.
- ✓ Keep good records of every meeting.
- ✓ Assess each cadre meeting to be sure inquiry process was followed.
- ✓ Ask the steering committee to assess the cadre's use of the process.
- ✓ Meet weekly.
- ✓ Be patient.
- ✓ Follow and Trust the Process!



Welcome to our new Accelerated Schools External Coaches!

Evelyn Moore – Accelerated Academy	
Sharron Acker –	Callisburg ISD
Susan Skaggs –	Commerce ISD
Pam Holland –	Decatur ISD
Charle Scott –	Ector County
Dale Edmonds –	El Dorado, Ark.
Margaret Baldwin –	Mineola ISD
Eloy Zapata –	Pearsall ISD
Staci Bollinger –	Snyder ISD
Francene Noah –	Snyder ISD

To accommodate requests, coaches meetings are scheduled as follows:

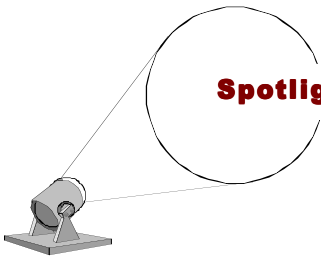
1st day – 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2nd day – 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

REMINDER...

Let everyone know they have easy access to this newsletter on our website at www.swacceleratedschools.net





West Texas farms, ranches, and oil wells surround Odessa High School in Odessa, Texas.

Currently, there are 2,300 students attending OHS.

At the end of the nine weeks, each group must get up in front of the class and make a full presentation of their project. They must be ready to defend the reason for their choice of project, why it works or doesn't work, and the methods used to design and build it. This year's classes have developed and are completing a broad range of projects such as a marina, motel, and café on Lake Buchanan; and a model of a conservation buffer strip, with actual growing crops, that protects a creek from excessive runoff of silt, herbicides, and insecticides. Other students are developing a workable system that can grow wheat hydroponically.

In the spring, the last 9-week period of the year, the Environmental Science classes study food, from the farm and feedlot all the way to the restaurant/grocery store. The classes are broken down into groups not larger than 4 or 5 students. The groups then decide on a project. The project must be about some aspect of the production, transportation, preparation, or marketing of food or food products. In the past, students have done wonderful projects including the full range from farms, cattle feedlots, and ranches, to trucking companies; fresh produce markets, all the way to five star steak houses. When the imagination is encouraged to soar, the results are amazing!

Several students have jobs in the food industry locally. This little bit of experience gives them insights into the place to start a project. I provide research and development information in the form of publications and pamphlets from TDA, USDA, and the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. We also use Texas Cattle Feeders Association information and sources from other crop and livestock associations. A large stack of my old farm magazines generally gets pretty well used as sources of information, and for presentation posters and illustrations. The combinations give the groups a lot of information to cull through as decisions are made, and hypotheses are tried.

While all this is going on, we keep planting and growing wheat, soybeans, corn, and milo in planters in the lab, and when the weather warms up, outside as well. The enthusiasm level for this type of lab work has yet to drop off as we go through the school year.

In the IPC classes we build kites to demonstrate Bernoulli's principle; windmills to demonstrate the force of the wind and the capabilities man has to harness that force; and bridges that illustrate the use of various forces and pressures that allow bridges to do their job safely over a long period of time.

The students work in groups of three or four to select, design, and build their projects. They must use scientific method in the selection and design of their projects. We display these projects in the classroom as they are completed. Many of my students do more than one project when time allows, and this level of enthusiasm seems to carry across the big part of the students in each class.

In all my classes, we spend a little time learning to tie a necktie. Not quite a lost art but almost. The girls generally pick this up much more quickly than the guys. We work on business introductions, resumes and applications for employment, and how to conduct yourself in situations that can come up in the job search process. Feedback from this is great.

I have had students with no idea how to grow anything, who secure employment with nurseries, putting what they did in the lab to practical application. Others have done a better job selling themselves because they had greater confidence in themselves! It is amazing what a little success in the classroom can translate into in the real world.

The use of these methods and projects seem to have a positive affect on attendance levels in my classes as well. I don't know whether it is scientific curiosity, or the fear that if they are not there they'll miss something, that keeps them coming. Whichever it is, it works.

The bottom line seems to be that by cultivating the inherent curiosity and desire to learn that is in every child at every level, the use of the Accelerated Schools Model only enhances the quality, depth, and breadth of learning. It Works!



Mr. Watson's students have planted two winter wheat patches on the OHS campus. Eventually, they will harvest the wheat.

For additional information, you can contact Oran Watson by e-mail at owats@aol.com