



**Upcoming Trainings:**

Powerful Learning III

Jan. 12 – 13 Austin  
Jan. 22 – 23 North TX  
Mar. 30 – 31 Region I

Powerful Learning & Literacy

Feb. 3 – 4 Austin

Powerful Learning & Math

Feb. 3 – 4 Austin

Powerful Learning II

February – location tbd

**Upcoming Meetings:**

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference:**

Nov. 7–8, 2003 Austin

Principals & Coaches

Dec. 4 – 5 Austin

Principals & Coaches

Feb. 12 – 13 Region I

Networking Meetings

Mar. 5 Region I & Austin

Coaches Wrap-Up

May 6 – 7 location tbd

**Contact us at...**

The Southwest Center  
for Accelerated Schools  
4030 W. Braker Lane  
Bldg. 2, Suite 244  
Austin, TX 78759

Phone: 512.232.0700  
Fax: 512.232.0707

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

**A Rainbow All Day Long**  
By Patricia A. Calhoun, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher

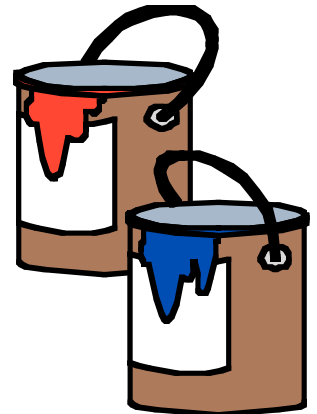
Linda, one of my students, recorded in her reflection journal, “Our portables are bright colors, very bright! They are red, dark red, pink, blue, yellow, light blue, green, purple, golden yellow, light green, and orange.” Another student, Ahn, wrote, “A rainbow all day long! Now parents can follow the rainbow and find out where their child’s class is on our campus!”

The Portable Painting Project was a service-learning project at Walnut Creek Elementary School in Austin I.S.D. As a first year teacher in an Accelerated School, I was overwhelmed and amazed at everything teachers do in addition to teaching. However, I’ve also learned that we do not just focus on what a teacher teaches, but on how a teacher teaches. It is called Powerful Learning.

Last November, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students learned that PACT (Parent-Adopter-Community and Teachers) wanted to improve the appearance of the faded portable buildings on the campus. Amanda, whose mom actively participated in PACT, reported to the class each week about the discussions regarding the portables.

My 5<sup>th</sup> grade math students began brainstorming ideas on how to make the dull portables more visually appealing. They discussed painting them, as well as covering them with wallpaper, posters, or pictures. Eventually, they decided that if it was their decision, they would paint the portables. So, the students and I created a measurement unit plan that included lessons on perimeter, area, surface area, and budgets and submitted it to our principal for review.

Students began this unit by measuring their bedrooms and calculating how many gallons of paint they needed to paint their own rooms. Then they contacted Home Depot to get prices of various types of paint and calculated how much it would cost to paint their room. Next, they applied their measurement knowledge and skills to painting the portables. Students measured the perimeters of the portables, calculated the surface area, determined the amount of paint required, and created a final budget. Surprisingly, students learned that it could cost over \$1,500 for a contractor to paint one portable and Walnut Creek had eleven portables to paint! (cont. on page 4)



**Highlights and Happenings**

The Southwest Center announces the publication of *A Guide to Inquiry in an Accelerated School*. The *Guide* is a comprehensive roadmap to assist in the successful implementation of inquiry for school-wide problem-solving. There are several new tools to help cadres and schools target their work on the ideas and programs that will have the greatest benefit for student learning and achievement.

Cadre leaders and other members of the school leadership team will receive a copy of the new *Guide* at Advanced Inquiry Training this fall. External coaches and principals will have a master copy of the *Guide* and will make a copy for members of school cadres.

## From the Director...

Last spring was a very exciting time for the staff of the Southwest Center. We had the joy of visiting all of our schools for the annual site reflection visit. Each of our schools had made tremendous gains in the implementation of the process and more importantly in the overall achievement of the students. We saw many innovations taking place on the campuses and in the classrooms. Some of these will be presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference November 7-8 at the Renaissance Hotel in Austin.



At this conference we will recognize our network schools that received the Demonstrated designation during the site reflection visit. These six schools clearly exemplify the best ASP practices in our network. We are pleased to honor A. C. Williams Elementary, Commerce ISD; Stanfield Elementary, Snyder ISD; Hector P. Garcia Elementary and Bethune Early Childhood Center, Temple ISD; Haslet Elementary, Northwest ISD and Curtis Elementary, Weatherford ISD.

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

We also visited several schools that were very close to the Demonstrated designation. We expect many more schools to join the list this year. Congratulations to all of our schools for their work on behalf of children.

### Bonnie's Book Club Recommendation:

*Holding Sacred Ground: Essays on Leadership, Courage, and Endurance in Our Schools* by Carl Glickman is the recommended reading for Fall 2003. "What must school leaders think about and practice," asks Glickman, "if all students are to have a truly democratic education that will equip each student with the knowledge, skills, and applications to become wise, caring, and participatory citizens of an improving democratic society? To develop and implement such an education for all students at all grade levels takes thought, courage and savvy leadership." From his 25 years of school improvement work, Glickman offers proven advice on leadership, collective action and examples of curriculum, methods and strategies for improving student achievement while building citizenship capabilities.

Published by Jossey-Bass ([www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com))



## Scientifically Based Research: What is it?

The No Child Left Behind legislation requires that only those strategies and methods “proven effective by the standard of scientifically based research should be included in school reform programs.”(U.S. Dept. of Ed. 2002) It further defines “scientific, research-based programs” as 1) grounded in theory; 2) evaluated by third parties; 3) published in peer-reviewed journals; 4) sustainable; 5) replicable in schools with diverse settings; and 6) able to demonstrate evidence of effectiveness.

Although we have always expected schools to choose practices that are research based, this legislation makes it even more imperative that schools select strategies and programs that meet the above criteria. Unfortunately many of the programs we see being implemented in our schools are based on someone’s intuition of what needs to be done or packaged programs that have not been rigorously evaluated. Cadres need to do their homework thoroughly before recommending a specific course of action to the School As a Whole. “Where is the evidence?” should be the mantra for our cadres, steering committees and SAW.

The Southwest Center recommends several resources to help you. Education Resources and Information Center (ERIC) on the U.S. Department of Education website is an excellent clearinghouse of information. The Southwest Center’s Powerful Learning Rubric as well as the Targeting Student Success chart can also assist in selecting strategies that work.

If you need further assistance, consult with your external coach, go to our website for research sources or contact the Southwest Center

## Web News!

Have you discovered the updated Powerful Learning Resources on our website? New material is added to our web site regularly. We are continuing to expand the section on web resources and encourage you to submit suggestions for inclusion. There are many wonderful education sites and we are trying to find those that are most compatible with Powerful Learning. What have you found?

## Coaches’ Corner

### Kudos to our External Coaches

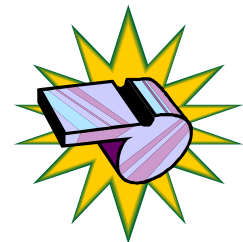
Many, many thanks go to the coaches who participated in the Inquiry Camp on August 18-20. Because of their dedicated work we were able to develop three training modules—Advanced Inquiry, Mini-Taking Stock and New Cadre Leader Orientation. The coaches also assisted in editing *A Guide to Inquiry in an Accelerated School*.

The following coaches attended the Camp: Sharron Acker, Margaret Baldwin, Ken Heilman, Pam Holland, Bertha Mejia, Sandra McConaughy, Evelyn Moore, Janet Reichel, Isabel Solis, Charle Scott, Juana Simmons and Martha Stone.

### Graduate Credit Available from UTPB

Dr. Becky Oekerman, a professor in the College of Education at the University of Texas-Permian Basin and an Accelerated Schools coach, announced the continuation of a graduate credit program for educators in the Southwest Center Accelerated Schools network. The course is considered a special topic in Early Childhood Education.

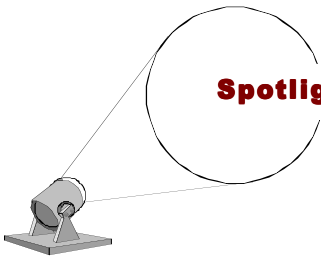
Participants are required to register for admission to UTPB. This one semester course does not require on-campus attendance but does require some course work in addition to the Accelerated Schools work. For further information, please contact Dr. Oekerman at [oeberman\\_b@utpb.edu](mailto:oeberman_b@utpb.edu).



### REMINDER...

Let everyone know they have easy access to this newsletter on our website at [www.swacceleratedschools.net](http://www.swacceleratedschools.net)





Walnut Creek is the largest elementary school in Austin I.S.D.

Currently, over 900 students attend this ethnically diverse campus.

Amanda's mother explained to my classes how much money PACT would allocate to the Portable Painting Project. After all the work they had done, the students realized that there was not enough money budgeted to paint all of the portables. However, they were so interested in the project, they volunteered to help with the painting in order to reduce the costs.

After enlisting the help of our art teacher, Mr. Jones, and another PACT parent, Mr. Manzanna (a painter by profession, who generously donated his expertise) we were ready to transform eleven dingy, brown portables into brilliant splashes of color. Mr. Manzanna arrived early one morning with his truck, equipment, wife and their baby. We were ready and dressed to paint. Our principal had water available for us and the custodial staff gave us rags and containers. Student photographers and reporters documented the events of the day. These are excerpts from their reports...

*"We asked Mr. Mazanna, 'Why did you help paint the portables?' He responded by saying, 'Because my son and daughter come to this school and I want the best for them'..." --Alejandro and Alberto*

*"We painted, we cleaned ramps, it was fun, it was hard, it took a long time, everybody was happy that we helped our school." --Yessica, Cristina, and Maria*

*"I love the colors! What amazes me is that the parents, teachers, volunteers, and kids all helped! We used to look like other schools and now we look different. I hope that other schools use our project. One small thing can make a big difference! --LuRae*

*"It was a big challenge, we had to cooperate and listen. We had to work together and get along...My favorite part of the project was being outside instead of inside. When we walk outside our classroom we always see a rainbow!" --Azia*

*"What we have is about 72 students working different shifts to paint the portables. Each shift was about one hour and fifteen minutes. I'm admiring all the work we've done!"--Spencer*

Throughout the project, we met before school, during school, and after school. We walked our project site and met with teachers of the portables. We discussed changes we would make next time, we wrote reflections in our journals, and we used math, math and more math. The students and I learned a lot and we had so much fun.

Hahn summarized this powerful learning experience accurately, "At first our portables were dull and ugly. Now they are colorful and pretty. How many other schools allowed their students to paint their portables?"

An Accelerated School already knows the answer to that question.

