

ARKANSAS 21C NETWORK MEETING
Atkins Celebration Hall, Paragould, AR

April 25, 2006

Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Vicki Shelby welcomed everyone and introduced Dr. Aaron Hosman, Superintendent of Paragould School District. Dr. Hosman welcomed the group and gave a brief overview. Representative Robert Thompson and House of Representative candidate Gary Biggs were also introduced. Ms. Shelby gave an overview of the days events. The group boarded a bus to conduct site visits.

Site Visit to Early Childhood Programs

The first stop on the tour of Paragould's early childhood programs was Elmwood – 21C Bush Center. This State licensed, accredited center is open year round from 6:00 a. m. until 5:30 p.m. and serves children from 6 weeks old to 5 years old. This center is staffed by highly qualified personnel. The staff includes P-4 certified teachers for the 3 and 4 year old children and paraprofessionals with CDA's and associate degrees for infant and toddlers. One focus of this center is strengthening families. An example of the activities conducted this year is the Camping Day with Dads. Curriculum at this site is delivered through a project approach method. This approach fosters problem solving and creative thinking. An example of the project approach is a restaurant project used in a 4 year old classroom. During this visit the JD ED Technology gave a demonstration of the Parenting Program Software. For further information visit their website at www.jdedtech.com.

The next stop on the tour was at Oakwood Alternative School. Housed at this location is an infant toddler's classroom for high school students' children. After Oakwood, Baldwin Elementary was visited. Two Pre-K classrooms are housed and before and after care programs are conducted at this site. Each Pre-K classroom has 16 four year old students. Baldwin was the first site in Paragould to implement the project based approach to teaching. The before and after care programs have 30 students enrolled. This program is non-academic in nature. After visiting the 21C programs, we visited classrooms in Baldwin's A+ School.

Introduction to Schools of the 21st Century

During lunch Beth Lapin gave a brief overview of Schools of the 21st Century to new staff and non-21C programs. The participants were from Hoxie, Vilonia, and North Little Rock. She provided all participants with packets of information to "Get the Word Out" about 21C.

Parent Involvement Tips

Norma Meek, Yale 21C national trainer from Kentucky, began a discussion on the issues raised by the 2004-2005 AR21C Evaluation. She began by conducting an expectation activity. Through this activity, Ms. Meek demonstrated that parents want to know the school's expectation. In this age of accountability parents are saying, "What do you want from us?" Through group discussion a consensus was reached on three barriers to parental involvement: Communication, Time, and Intimidation/Parent Empathy. Ideas from the group to solve these barriers are listed below:

- Flexible arrival and departure times of the staff
- Allow parent to utilize the library to check out materials
- Open a computer lab for parent use
- Share with parents what and why we need them involved in their child's educational experience
- Target week nights for these activities
- Ride the bus to and from school with kindergarten student one day before school begins
- Provide opportunities for parents to see student work
- Provide door prizes for attendance – gas cards, etc
- Conduct small group gatherings to avoid intimidation

Ms. Meeks shared 21C Parent Involvement Survey. The most parental involvement occurs when parents are coming to see their children. Lower involvement occurs when involving a parent in a child's reading, volunteering and attendance in PTA. Ms. Meeks ended by emphasizing that school folks are the heroes in the schools, and they are changing the lives of children.

AR21C Announcements and Update

Beth Lapin made several announcements and updates. The first topic of discussion was ways of "Getting the Word Out" about Arkansas 21C. This will be included as part of the in the 21C annual report. A handout with several suggestions was provided. The next topic was about the 21C National Training Institute being held July 17th and 18th with the 19th being Arkansas Day. There will not be a reception on Sunday this year. The Arkansas 21C web page was discussed next. Participants are to send suggested improvements to Beth. Updates to individual program pages may also be sent to Beth. After that, membership into Arkansas 21C was the focus of conversation. Questions were raised about the benefits of joining if there was not grant money attached. Susan Underwood from the Department of Education gave a historical overview of 21C in Arkansas including several benefits and how it fits into the vision of our state. The criteria and how to add members must be decided. Paulette Shields, Velma Sanderson, and Dawn Jeffrey agreed to work on the criteria for membership. Those interested in helping are to contact Beth. Then, possible dates for the fall network meeting were mentioned. Conflicting dates were gathered but no decision was made. After that, Beth led the discussion on displaced students and HeadStart. In this group, few had continued collaboration with other in helping the evacuees. Beth will send an e-mail requesting information about HeadStart collaboration. Susan Underwood then shared information about Arkansas History curriculum. She shared examples of books that can be utilized

Pre-K through 8th grade as supplemental materials to teach Arkansas History. AETN has a virtual tour of the Governor's mansion that can also be used as a resource.

Arkansas Out-of School Network

Wood Sue Herlein from ASU Childhood Services presented information on the newly established AOSN. She gave a brief overview of the C. S. Mott Foundation funding for 2005 for Arkansas. The Arkansas Out of School Network is collaborating to develop a plan for quality out-of-school programs, identify new stakeholders and partners to join the network, collect information on existing out-of-school time programs and build the infrastructure to manage an information system. Next she discussed the Governor's Summit that was held in March to promote AOSN. The next area meeting on quality standards will be held May 19th in Little Rock. The main topic will be a definition of quality. Quality standards for extended learning opportunities will be compiled from all commonalities gathered. The two areas targeted at this time will be quality standards and professional development. Cabot will represent Schools of the 21st Century at the meeting on quality standards. Batesville will represent 21C at the session on professional development. Meeting notes should be e-mailed to Beth Lapin.

Site visit to After-school Program

A site visit was conducted at Woodrow Wilson, a K-4 school. Safari, the after-school program, is a district-wide program which serves K-2 students. This is an academic focused program where students must be referred in order to attend.

The meeting ended after the visit to Safari.