

**Arkansas 21C Regional Network Meeting:
Thursday, April 27, 2006
Embassy Suites, Rogers, AR**

Dr. Janie Darr, Superintendent, Rogers School District welcomed attendees to Rogers.

We boarded busses and were taken to five Rogers Elementary Schools (Jones, Old Wire, Westside, Tillery, and Hill) to visit in their ABC classrooms.

We returned to the Embassy Suites conference center to enjoy a networking lunch.

After lunch, Norma Meek facilitated a discussion focused on Parent Involvement. Norma presented issues raised by the AR 21C Evaluation, specifically the attendee's views of what hinders parent involvement in their schools. The responses of the group were narrowed to three main areas of concern: Communication, Time, and Intimidation/Comfort Level.

Attendees suggested the following strategies to address each area of concern.

Communication:

- ❑ Don't assume that families know how to be involved. Ask
- ❑ Provide families with clear expectations of what the school would like them to do with their child at home and at school.
- ❑ Think creatively about how to provide school activity information to families. Marketing. Wal-Mart announcements. Where do our families spend their time? Target those places.

Time:

- ❑ Be flexible, especially with Parent/Teacher conference times.
- ❑ Conduct survey of the most convenient times for families

Intimidation/Comfort Level

- ❑ Use inclusive language. Families vs. Parents
- ❑ Ask families. What will make you more comfortable at our school?
- ❑ Welcoming training. SMILE more. Make school environment welcoming

Jennifer Harris with the Arkansas Out of School Network shared an overview of the Network, its history, mission, and goals. Jennifer also offered opportunities for members of AR 21C to become involved in the AOSN. Additional information available at the AOSN website: www.aosn.org. Beth reported that Diane Lawrence from Hamburg has agreed to represent 21C on the state-wide AOSN committee; Cabot will represent 21C on the quality working group and Batesville on the professional development one. As the two other working groups get started, other volunteers will be added. The goal is to have 21C representation at each working group and statewide meeting.

Beth Lapin gave an update about several upcoming 21C events and activities:

2006 Summer Training Institute at Yale

2007 Summer Conference in Little Rock

Coordinating Committee appointments and activities: Deb Swink was accepted to the AR21C Coordinating Committee.

Introduced many ways to promote awareness about the School of the 21st Century through a new initiative, *Get the Word Out* and expected events between now and the 2007 conference.

Fall 21C Network Meeting –

Tentatively set for first week in October. Discussions of possible sites for fall meeting and planning assistance requested.

Presented Awards for new programs and 21C Evaluation returns.

Discussed continued collaboration for Hurricane Katrina victims and with Head Start agencies.

Discussed 21C website, usefulness, and needed individual program web page updates.

The meeting ended with interested attendees invited to travel to tour after-school programs in the Rogers Elementary Schools.