



# Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program Chronicle

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## Schools Embrace Dedicated Professional Development Time

Better than two thirds of the schools in Northeastern Nevada now have regularly scheduled professional development time (RSPDT) devoted to meeting the professional development needs of faculties during contract hours. While the configurations and frequency of the times vary, the trend toward regularly scheduled professional development time signals a shift in thinking about professional development itself and acknowledges the fact that teachers already devote huge chunks of their own time to their profession and to planning for the day-to-day demands of the classroom. By embedding professional development in the workday, schools are shifting away from the one-shot workshop model that passed for professional development not many years ago.

In most instances,

RSPDT is devoted to examining data and developing instructional strategies within the context of professional learning communities. In most schools, NNRPDP regional coordinators or site facilitators help plan and lead the school's professional development focus and provide support for and follow up with faculty.

The variety of models that schools have adopted for RSPDT is indicative of the growth of needs-based, site-specific professional development. Though several schools have chosen Fridays or Mondays, Wednesdays are the most popular days for professional development time. Most set aside anywhere from an hour to two hours—either weekly or bi-weekly. Some, however, meet only monthly or quarterly. Though the time for professional development in schools is

still only a fraction of the 20 to 40 percent of teachers' time dedicated to professional development in many European and Asian schools, there's no doubt that schools and school administrators in Northeastern Nevada value site-based, long-term professional development.

Scheduling professional development to take place during contract hours assures that teachers will be exposed to the professional development offered at their school site. Ideally, the model allows for teachers to help determine the professional development needs unique to each school site. When teachers become stakeholders, the professional development model shifts from something that is done *to* teachers or *for* teachers to something that is done *with* teachers.

**Register now for the Literacy and Learning Conference to be held on January 25-26, 2008. Information is on our website!**

## Resources

**Southern PDP**—If you are looking for teacher resources in all subject areas, visit this site, [www.rpd.net/](http://www.rpd.net/).

**Teacher Tap**—This is a free professional development resource that helps educators and librarians address common questions about the use of

technology in teaching and learning. Visit <http://eduscapes.com/tap/>

**Teacher Vision**—Discover a wide range of resources at this site. Articles, lesson plans, as well as resources from notable publishers can be found at

[www.teachervision.fen.com/pro-dev/resource/5778.html?detoured=1](http://www.teachervision.fen.com/pro-dev/resource/5778.html?detoured=1)

**NNRPDP Library**—Many books and videos are available for check out. Look at the list at [www.elko.k12.nv.us/pdp/library.htm](http://www.elko.k12.nv.us/pdp/library.htm).

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## Special points of interest:

- ♦ Check out our website at [www.elko.k12.nv.us/pdp](http://www.elko.k12.nv.us/pdp).
- ♦ There will be a NNRPDP Site Facilitator Workshop on January 12, 2008.
- ♦ Visit our calendar of events at [www.localendar.com/public/slneal](http://www.localendar.com/public/slneal).
- ♦ Look for details coming soon on our website regarding the Math and Science Symposium on March 7-8, 2008.

## “Good morning, PDP. This is Chris. May I help you?”

It's a fact: organizations depend on organization. And while most people who phone the Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development office know Chris Back primarily for her cheerful greeting, Chris is really the power behind the power in the NNRPDP. As office manager, Chris manages to keep order in a setting that often resembles a small, crowded, airport terminal with a hectic schedule of departures and arrivals. Her roles shift from traffic controller to conference planner to travel agent to computer guru.

The staff rely on Chris's skills and depend on her gentle firmness. Her thoughts are often the litmus test for ideas that arise during planning sessions, and, with amazing tact, she can point out the lead balloons in professional development initiatives.

While Chris hasn't quelled any revolutions, toppled any tyrants, or brought peace to the Mid East, she is a model of diplomacy, thoughtfulness, and good will. When the phone rings at the NNRPDP office, callers will likely hear “Good morning, PDP. This is

Chris. May I help you?” What they may not be able to infer from Chris's greeting is that they are speaking with the gravitational center of professional development in Northeastern Nevada.



*Chris Back,  
NNRPDP  
Office Manager*

**If you attend the Literacy and Learning Conference in January, you have the chance to win a trip to an educational conference of your choice.**

## Mary S. Black and Eliza Pierce Elementary T4S Plan for Improvement

Many teachers get frustrated with T4S because they don't get timely feedback from it. They would like to know how they did and what things they can change but don't have a way to access the information. Lander County schools, Mary S. Black (MSB) and Eliza Pierce (EP) would like to make that information accessible and timely by having monthly discussions and walkthroughs to address their areas of greatest need.

NNRPDP site facilitators Lori Price and Jill Paris, along with principal Tom Brannan and regional coordinator Jessie Westmoreland sat down together in August 2007 to address this issue. They analyzed the spring 2007 T4S data to find the areas of strengths and weaknesses. Using that data, a calendar was set up to discuss one item each month and then to have a follow-up walkthrough with feedback given.

They began with a staff discussion of what is required to establish a literacy rich environment. Staff shared ideas within grade levels, and they looked at the protocol requirements. The following month regional coordinator Jessie Westmoreland did a walkthrough with an observation sheet that was directly related to literacy rich environment only. Jessie added comments to the sheet and left it with each observed teacher.

This on-going project is in its fourth month. They have discussed and had follow up walkthroughs with feedback on literacy rich environment, transitions and routines establish and maintained, objectives/standards communicated and key vocabulary emphasized. They will continue with student interaction, verbal scaffolding, maximizing student engagement, and instructional time maximized.

One item the group would like to add is verbal feedback and conversation between the observer and the teacher.

They believe their spring T4S observation data will reflect an improvement in their areas concentration.



*Mary S. Black Elementary*

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## Paraeducators

Humboldt, Lander and White Pine County School Districts have developed opportunities to provide their paraeducators with training that will define roles and responsibilities. The training is formatted to allow paraeducators to develop skills that will help them guide the students they work with to independence.

Paraeducators are a necessary part of the educational system. Often, students with disabilities need someone to help them negotiate the educational process. That person then becomes the student's advocate, support, and skill developer.

The program offers paraeducators the chance to participate in two hours of training in each of the following areas: Roles and Responsibilities, Communication, Behavior and Classroom Management, Emergency Situations and IEP/Special Education Issues.

**"Expect more and you will get more. High expectations are important for everyone."**  
—The American Association for High Education Bulletin

## New Teacher Induction Programs Start The Year Right

A common misconception about "new teacher induction" is that it is for brand new, right out of college, teachers. Not so!!

Like any individual, every district has its own unique personality. District personalities emphasize the areas that are valued by the district. Over time every district supports programs, strategies, materials, and instructional techniques that define that uniqueness. Districts make huge investments in time and money to train staff over time. New employees, even employees with years of classroom experience, must become aware of district expectations and make the transition into district culture. Evidence, over time, indicates that effective induction programs reduce teachers leaving the profession and support effective teaching therefore directly impacting overall student achievement. (Breax & Wong, 2003)

New teacher induction programs can ease that transition and help new employees adapt to district culture more quickly. The Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program is supporting induction programs in Elko, White Pine, and Lander Counties.

In White Pine County School District new teachers are required

to participate in the White Pine START Program (**S**upportive **T**rain-**I**ng **A**ctivates **R**esourceful **T**eaching). Regional coordinator, Sharon McLean, has been working with a White Pine committee of administrators and teachers to create an effective START program over the past three years. START participants are involved in one week in August before the school year begins. This week-long training introduces White Pine teachers to CELL/ExLL literacy strategies, Fred Jones and Louis Mangione classroom management strategies, effective student engagement strategies, Nevada State Standards and how to use them, Love and Logic, conflict reduction, district technology, and a tour of Ely and its surrounding areas. Other policies and programs specific to White Pine are emphasized during this introduction to the district. Support for new teachers continues during the school year with five follow up sessions which give new teachers a place to ask questions and collaborate.

Six new teachers in Lander County as well as the Battle Mountain High School Instructional Coach, Theresa Ryan, have been participating in the New Teacher Induction program this year. NNRDP regional coordinators,

Cathy Smales, Jessie Westmoreland, Teresa Noland, and director Hugh Rossolo have been facilitating the program based in part on The Effective Teacher series by Harry Wong. These sessions have focused on the characteristics of an effective teacher, discipline and procedures, and lesson mastery. Throughout each session, the coordinators have incorporated various student engagement strategies that can be used in the classroom. The next meeting will be held on January 29 in the Lander County Board Room. The topic of discussion for that day will be teaching styles and strategies, incorporating the 4MAT system developed by Bernice McCarthy as well as the work by other noted authors.

In Elko, the NNRDP works directly with the Elko County School District to present a week long summer RISE program. This program, for all teachers new to the district, is based on the book The First Days of School by Harry Wong and the teachings of Annette L. Breax. Instructional coaches employed by the district are a major component of the RISE program. They work with the new teachers constantly throughout the year to reinforce the skills taught in the summer program.

# Nevada Early (K-6) Literacy Intervention Program

NELIP 2007-2008

*Professional Development Goal*

*Through collaboration, NELIP will facilitate research based literacy professional development to improve student and teacher learning in order to create life long learners.*

The Northeastern NELIP program serves Elko, Lander, Eureka, Humboldt, and White Pine counties in literacy professional development. Twenty-one teacher site facilitators conduct monthly professional learning community book clubs at twenty school sites across the five county region. Book club participants have the opportunity to earn a graduate credit or in-service credit

if book clubs are conducted during out-of-contract hours.

In September, the facilitators met and were given the opportunity to choose a book from a suggested list that would meet the early literacy needs of their school. During the meeting they also created a goal for the year, a book club evaluation rubric, and a monthly reflection form. In addition, the facilitators planned how to collect data on the effectiveness of their book club. The group will meet again in April, compare results, and create a plan for the 2008-09 school year.

It has been a pleasure during my first year as the NELIP coordinator to work with the dedi-

cated site facilitators, administrators, and teachers scattered across the vast and remote expanses of northeastern Nevada.



*Jerre Lamb,  
NELIP Coordinator*

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### Who are we?

The Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP), established and funded by the Nevada State Legislature, is committed to providing quality professional development to teachers in the school districts of Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, and White Pine counties.

### Our Mission Statement:

Our mission is to enhance student learning within the context of Nevada State Professional Development Standards by recognizing and supporting research-based instruction and by maintaining a collaborative learning culture and facilitating instructional leadership.

### **2007-2008 NNRPDP Staff**

Chris Back

Valerie Byrnes

Robin Johns

Jerre Lamb

Robert McGinty

Sharon McLean

Teresa Noland

Hugh Rossolo

Cathy Smales

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