

NESA WELCOMES New Staff Member



Anne Marie Zafiroopoulos joined the NESA staff in January 2007.

Originally from Scotland she has lived in Greece since 1985 where she worked as a tour operator and then as an English language tutor. Before moving to Greece she was an assistant manager for a retail company. Anne Marie is married with one son.

CONTACT NESA

Near East South Asia Council of Overseas Schools
c/o American College of Greece
Gravias 6, Aghia Paraskevi 15342
Athens GREECE

Tel: (30-210) 600-9821
Fax: (30-210) 600-9928
nesa@nesacenter.org
conferences@nesacenter.org
www.nesacenter.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

David Chojnacki

NESA CENTER STAFF:

- Laura Canellopoulou
- Mary Cassimis
- Aristea Evangelou
- Jill Kalamaris
- Anne Marie Zafiroopoulos

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WELCOME NEW SCHOOL HEADS!

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Michael Smith - The Universal American School, Hawalli, Kuwait

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Betty Koleilat - American Academy for Girls, Hawalli, Kuwait

Irene Henderson - Dasman Model School, Dasman, Kuwait

Tania Woodburn - Fawzia Sultan International, Hawalli, Kuwait

Iain Stirling - Advanced Learning Schools, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

NESA WELCOMES New Regular Member

International School of Hyderabad

6-3-346, Road #1

Bajara Hills

Hyderabad 500 034

Andhra Pradesh

INDIA

Tel: 91-40 2335-1110

Fax: 91-40 2339-5065

ish@ishhyd.com

www.ishyd.com

Head of School: Helge Gallinger



NEWS

Volume 10 Number 1
Fall 2007



CALENDAR

September 14-15, 2007

Spring Educators Conference
Planning Workshop, Amman,
Jordan (for teacher reps only)

September 25, 2007 Deadline

Fall Leadership Conference
Online registration form/fees &
hotel reservations

October 1, 2007 Deadline

Fall Training Institute
Online registration forms/fees

October 25-28, 2007

FALL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Shangri-La, Bangkok, Thailand

November 2-3, 2007

FALL TRAINING INSTITUTE
Bahrain Conference Center
(Crowne Plaza)

November 1, 2007 Deadline

NESA NEWS submissions,
winter issue

December 1, 2007 Deadline

Haas/ Hansen Student Award
application, Margaret Sanders
Scholarship application, Call for
Papers submissions

December 20, 2007 Deadline

Winter Training Institute
Online registration form/fees

January 25-26, 2008

WINTER TRAINING INSTITUTE
Bahrain Conference Center
(Crowne Plaza)

February 19, 2008 Deadline

Spring Educators Conference
Online registration form/fees
& hotel reservations
(Bangkok: April 5-7)

Welcome to a Wonderful Year - 2007-2008

"When people share a common vision, they can perform feats that would otherwise be impossible... There is something in the human spirit that longs for participation with others, that wants to be involved in a collective endeavor." - Robert Fritz

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The words of Robert Fritz are a great way to begin the 2007-2008 school year. As each one of us looks to the year ahead, it is both encouraging and empowering to know that we're part of a 'collective endeavor': preparing our students to be knowledgeable, skilled, compassionate and involved citizens of the future...and of the world.

Since its beginnings, NESACenter has been dedicated to creating a sense of belonging and identity, diminishing feelings of professional isolation and fostering a culture of mutual support and professional engagement. We will continue in this spirit. In addition, we pledge to further the work we began three years ago as part of our strategic plan, "NESACenter 2010", in aligning our work with the standards of the National Staff Development Council and striving to realize our vision of "creating dynamic, collaborative professional relationships which transcend current barriers and boundaries in order to maximize student learning."

During the coming year, we will be hosting four major opportunities for professional development:

- **Fall Leadership Conference** in Bangkok (October 25-28)

- **Fall Training Institute** in Bahrain (November 2-3)

- **Winter Training Institute** in Bahrain (January 25-26)

- **Spring Educators Conference** in Bangkok (April 5-7)

Details of each of these events are in this issue of "NESACenter News" and on our website: www.nesacenter.org. We are sure that you'll find them to be full of exciting offerings from an outstanding array of presenters. We invite you to join us!

We have a whole year ahead of us, a year full of opportunities to do the good and noble work of teaching children, to grow professionally by learning from each other and to make a positive difference in the world around us. We look forward to working with you to make this happen.

I leave you with this closing quote from **Roland Barth**, a great educator:

"If you want to predict the future, create it! This is precisely what school people now have the opportunity—and the imperative—to do."

With best wishes from all of us in the NESACenter,

David Chojnacki
Executive Director



See special insert about NESACenter's 2007-2008 conference offerings!

From the NESACenter Board President

Dear NESACenter Colleagues,

On behalf of the NESACenter Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2007/08 school year. I hope this year is the best year ever for you and your school!

I also want to invite you to make NESACenter an important part of your school year. Our Mission puts student learning at your school at the forefront of our efforts, and we hope you will take advantage of the many opportunities that come along with your membership in this organization.

Chief among those opportunities is the chance to collaborate with colleagues across the NESACenter region through our several conferences and other initiatives, all of which are aimed at supporting learning in your school.

Finally, I want to offer a very special welcome to our colleagues who are new to the NESACenter region. I am confident that you will find NESACenter to be a dynamic and collegial organization, and we need your active engagement if we're to stay that way. Please don't feel that being new

is an impediment to your full participation. You're most welcome as a new member of the NESACenter family and we look forward to working with you in the coming years!

Have a wonderful school year, and do not hesitate to call on any Board member or the NESACenter if we can be of service.



Sincerely,
Brian Lahan
President, NESACenter Board of Directors
Superintendent, American Community School, Amman, Jordan

'NESACenter NEWS' ALSO ONLINE AT: www.nesacenter.org

Less Teaching, More Assessing

Teacher Feedback Is Key to Student Performance

By John Wilcox, *Education Update*,
February 2006 | Volume 48 | Number 2

Teachers spend too much time teaching. Now there's a concept guaranteed to provoke a reaction in a room full of teachers. Nonetheless, that's precisely the message put across by **Grant Wiggins** during a session at ASCD's 2005 Conference on Teaching and Learning, held last fall in San Francisco. The coauthor (along with Jay McTighe) of ASCD's acclaimed *Understanding by Design* and *The Understanding by Design Handbook* contends that the essence of good instruction lies not in presentation of content - teaching - but in assessing student learning and coaching students toward better performance.

"We're paid to coach learners, not teach content," Wiggins asserted in his presentation. That's more important now than ever. State and local learning standards, love 'em or hate 'em, spell out reasonably specific measures of what students should know and be able to do.

Standards give students a performance target to aim for and offer teachers a basis for providing feedback that will help students achieve high performance. Providing feedback, Wiggins argues, is one of the most fundamental teaching skills. Designing and using feedback systems gives teachers a way to assess student learning on the fly - while the learning is still happening - and make midcourse corrections to help maximize student performance.

"Common Sense That We Don't Honor"

Paradoxically, said Wiggins, the rise of standards sometimes leads teachers to spend less time giving feedback to students. When standards create a prescriptive environment - dictating what's to be taught and how - feedback and ongoing formative assessment get short shrift.

This is especially a problem in schools where the results of high-

stakes testing are used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of instruction.

"In the world of standards, people are inclined to teach much more and give much less feedback," noted Wiggins. Less feedback means less time spent practicing, thinking about, and mastering new material, and that makes it less likely that students will meet the standards. "To meet standards, you need lots of attempts to try to meet the standards and to get feedback. A kid's first and fifth try are not going to work. In a world of standards and textbooks and syllabi, people overlap. They don't build in time for feedback use."

He continued, "This is common sense that we don't honor as teachers. We get fixated on the inputs, the content, and not enough on the desired output: resultant quality performance. The result is superficial. To get quality performance, you need feedback. So you have to plan free space in the syllabus for feedback and its use. You don't see it in mainstream classrooms very much."

Beyond Advice and Praise

Few teachers simply deliver a lecture and expect students to thoroughly absorb the information. They interact with their students in a variety of ways. A math teacher perhaps regularly offers tips on how to solve problems. A language-arts teacher provides clues on how to decipher a new word. And most teachers offer praise to students who are making progress.

But Wiggins believes that this doesn't add up to feedback.

"Feedback is different from advice or guidance. It's also different from praise or blame," he asserted. "Feedback is information. 'Good job!' is not feedback; it's praise. Praise isn't information; it's affirmation. I think we give too much advice without the kid understanding why we're giving the advice. We

give too much advice and not enough feedback. So the student has a rigid interpretation of advice that puts them in no position to fluently and flexibly perform."

Wiggins defined feedback fairly simply: "Feedback tells you what you just did. Feedback is information you can use. It's descriptive and useful information about what you did and didn't do in light of a goal."

A Feedback System, a Learning System

Making sure students understand that goal is a critical first step in creating a useful feedback system. In many cases, the state or local standard provides the measure, but it is the teacher's job to help students understand that standard.

"If you want me, as a student, to meet the standard, then you better make sure I know what the standard is," Wiggins advised. "We have to work very hard to eliminate mystery and secrecy, so that the student never says, 'I don't know what you want.' We have to minimize opaqueness, mystery, and secrecy about what excellence is."

For learning to work, students also need to understand what a masterful performance looks like. In the initial stages of the learning process, good teachers demonstrate and model the behavior, skill, or knowledge at hand.

"You can't achieve a goal as a learner without a clear model of what you're trying to accomplish. If you want people to achieve a result, they need a model of what you want them to achieve," Wiggins said.

After giving students an opportunity to try out their learning and practice their newfound skill, it's time for the feedback. Wiggins said good feedback is timely, ongoing, expert, accurate, and consistent. It is user-friendly in approach and amount, descriptive, and specific regarding the desired performance. It is honest yet constructive.

Some good feedback doesn't rely on anything the teacher does. When a speaker sees the audience on the edge of their seats and the room gets still, she knows she is doing well. A diver who can watch a side-by-side video comparison of two attempts gets good feedback simply by observing.

For other kinds of learning, however, the teacher needs to set the feedback loop in motion. Wiggins offered these examples of good feedback:

- "You are watching the pitcher's face, not the ball."
- "At the end of this paragraph in the story you wrote, I felt puzzlement over the character's motives; was that your intent?"
- "In all the problems you got right, you present a logical rationale; in most of the ones you got wrong, you really don't show your work or your reasoning."
- "You spent about a third of the time reading from the paper and not looking at your audience. I also counted 41 'ums.'"

Feedback like this lets students assess themselves. It doesn't tell them what to do, but it does help them understand where to make improvements. Opportunities for self-assessment and self-correction are vital parts of the feedback process. Further, a teacher's careful observation of student performance can offer cues about where additional information or instruction might be helpful.

Assessment That Works

Thus, feedback functions as a truly practical kind of assessment - one that Wiggins argues is far more valuable than tests or grades. "Letter grades do not communicate anywhere near the level of information you need in a competency-based system," he said.

"What [students] say in their self-assessment will reveal to you whether they understand the goal

and the purpose and what quality looks like," Wiggins asserted. "You may find that they fixate on things that are relatively unimportant, and that will tell you reams about the adjustments you need to make."

Wiggins said he doesn't advocate doing away with tests; he just doesn't want schools to rely on them to make decisions about how to help individual students learn.

"I'm not saying let's get rid of testing. I'm saying if the only feedback system you have about how you are doing against state standards is one test at the end of the year that you don't know the results of until the summer, that's a dumb system," Wiggins observed. "You've got to know how you're doing in November and February and March against May standards so you can make adjustments before it's too late."

Wiggins encourages all teachers to incorporate feedback strategies into their portfolios. Doing so doesn't require an entirely new set of

instructional skills, just the conscientious and purposeful application of things most good teachers try to do every day.

"You can start really small," Wiggins said. "You can practice giving feedback to see how it goes with just a lesson or a unit."

He is convinced that learners will benefit.

"I'm asking you to apply common sense to curriculum and assessment," Wiggins said. "It's going to overturn a lot of habits and traditions. Feedback and results are not the coin of the realm in most American schools; the textbook and the syllabus are. I'm asking you to challenge the longstanding assumption that the syllabus, the framework, the pacing guide, the content is what matters. No, it's not. It's the results that matter. We need feedback against the desired results."

What Makes Good Feedback?

Wiggins argues that providing feedback goes beyond offering praise or advice to students. His audience at the ASCD Conference on Teaching and Learning agreed. In a group exercise, they compiled a list of qualities that define good feedback systems. These systems:

- Are quick and ongoing, taking place right after or during the learning.
- Are contextual, an integral part of the learning or activity.
- Address individual learners and their progress, not the whole class.
- Present a manageable amount of information so students can process and act on it.
- Model or demonstrate the desired behavior.
- Are specific.
- Break tasks into component parts.
- Provide opportunities to try the

activity again.

- Are descriptive, not evaluative.
- Include what learners didn't do in addition to what they did do.
- Use a shared vocabulary that all learners can understand.
- Rely on mutual trust, the belief that the teacher and students are partners in the feedback process.

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For NVS + NVSF updates go to the NESAC website: www.nesacenter.org

Building Homes, Breaking Barriers

By Charles Franck, Global Village Team Leader

From cane reed house building in Kyrgyzstan to earthquake relief work in Pakistan to raising money for Thai school children, more international schools are reaching beyond their classroom walls to help people in need. Whether international schools promote community service via their International Baccalaureate CAS program or other means; they see the value of providing quality experiences to their students.

One organization that is at the forefront of community service programs is **Habitat for Humanity (HFH)**. HFH is a non-denominational Christian charity dedicated to eliminating poverty housing. More than one million people in nearly one hundred countries all over the world live in HFH houses they helped build and pay for through low-cost, non-profit mortgages. HFH invites students, teachers, and people of all ages, faiths and ethnic backgrounds to join the mission.

Our recent Habitat for Humanity Global Village

trip to Hungary was a life enriching experience of getting involved and giving back for the 18 students from **Saudi Aramco Schools**. Students who take part in HFH typically are picking up a hammer for the first time...

Besides construction work, students develop problem solving and interpersonal skills during an HFH trip. They also experience the way others live, a different culture and the impact each of us can have in creating a better life for someone less fortunate.

Each volunteer also gives a donation to HFH that will pay for materials or loans in future builds. Donations often come from fundraising activities at the school or within the school's community prior to the build. They help develop a student's creativity, initiative, leadership and project management skills.



Raising a wall on the Habitat for Humanity site in Csurgó, Hungary.

By the end of the trip, the transformation in our students made me realize that the HFH experience is as life-changing for the volunteers as it is for the homeowner. As my colleague and team co-leader, **Julie Brockish** said, "All the things that take us away from our comfort zone, plus the physical labor, help us build character, tenacity and tolerance. We get exposed to new situations and see that there are other ways to live."

cfranck47@yahoo.com.

For more information on Habitat for Humanity please visit www.habitat.org. For the Global Village Program, please contact lferent@habitat.org

Leading A Building Of Leaders

National Board Certified Teachers raise the bar for all

By Joan Richardson

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Billie Hicklin frankly admits that she's often stymied when she attends a conference and hears administrators describing the challenges they face with their teaching staffs.

"They talk about issues that I just don't have to deal with. I've never dealt with an inferior teacher on my staff. I've never had to work to get a teacher up to speed. I really don't know what that's like," said Hicklin, principal of **Parkway School** in Boone, N.C.

How did Hicklin get to be so lucky? She works in a school that includes 16 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) among her staff of 43. Six other teachers were going through the certification process during the 2006-07 school year. If they are all successful, more than half of her teaching staff will hold the highly respected credential from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards by this time next year.

"I work in a building that's filled with thoroughbreds. The standards in this building are so high. Teachers who have chosen not to go through National Board certification still benefit from what they have learned. When you rub shoulders every day with people who have been through that process and who weave that experience into all of their conversations, the level of expertise just continues to rise," Hicklin said.

Hicklin's experience with a group of highly qualified teachers is exactly the kind of working situation that policy makers imagined when they supported the creation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 1987. And it's one reason why several states have ramped up their financial support to enable more teachers to go through the lengthy and rigorous process of certification.

National Board certification does more than just recognize teachers for their knowledge and skills. Teachers spend 200 to 400 hours and up to three years seeking the certificate and frequently call it one

of the best professional development experiences of their careers because of the depth of self-reflection included in the process.

Even as expectations for teaching have been ratcheted up by No Child Left Behind, many principals, especially in urban districts, still manage buildings in which they work with large numbers of inexperienced teachers, teachers who hold emergency certifications, and teachers who work outside their areas of expertise. But, in states that have made significant financial commitments to National Board certification, some principals face the opposite and enviable challenge of leading a substantial number of teacher leaders -- and trying to stay ahead of them.

Managing a staff that includes a wealth of NCBTs can be a delicate balancing act, said **Sheila Evans**, principal of **D.F. Walker Elementary School** in Edenton, N.C. Evans' staff of 30 teachers include 10 NCBTs. Both Evans and her assistant principal also were recognized as NCBTs before becoming administrators.

"You have to be careful not to create a culture of elitism. Just because someone has not chosen to pursue National Board certification does not mean they're not great teachers," Evans said.

But she believes the presence of so many NCBTs has substantially impacted the culture in her building. "NCBTs are constantly reflecting on their practice. It's just part of how they do their work. That impacts everyone who works with them," she said.

Likewise, Hicklin said having many NBCTs influences the conversation in a school. "They are just so pervasive in this building. It's amazing the level of conversations that we have about teaching and learning in teams, faculty meetings, and informal conversations. We are always talking about what good teaching looks like," said Hicklin who was in the first group of teachers who earned National Board certification in 1995.

As a leader, Evans believes she's responsible for nurturing leadership in all of her teachers. "Even though I honor my NBCTs and I expect them to do certain things, it's not the NBCTs who need to learn to lead a school. I want that culture of leadership to permeate throughout

my entire staff. Not everyone is a leader and they should not be pushed into it but they should be stretched so they're ready for it," Evans said.

During her first year as principal, Evans created a professional learning team comprising some teachers who were already leaders and others who were "willing to try their hand at this learning team idea."

Evans intended to introduce professional learning teams throughout the school during the next school year and she was preparing the group members to be facilitators for those teams. "I used my National Board experience, my administrative experience, my teaching experience. For a whole year, I worked with them as learning team," she said.

Leadership in the group rotated and each meeting included time for that day's leader to stop and reflect upon his or her work leading the group. Did I lead the team well today? Did I include enough opportunities for everyone to participate? Could I have done more to encourage more collaboration?

To Evans' surprise and delight, her facilitators wanted to spread leadership even further when they began to lead learning teams. "I had expected the members of the original group to be the facilitators of the other groups throughout the entire year. But they used the same model I had used with them. What happened is that everyone in the school is a facilitator at one point or another, including the teaching assistants," she said.

On the opposite side of the state in the **Watauga School District**, Hicklin said she has to do very little to encourage NBCTs to step up to leadership. "I don't do a lot to manipulate them to get them into key positions. They end up there anyway in the natural process of creating committees or working on staff development or creating school improvement plans," she said.

"Everyone in this school keeps growing because the teachers mentor each other and they encourage and collaborate with each other. We have a culture here that celebrates the achievements of teachers. I will take credit for creating that kind of atmosphere because I want as many teachers as possible

to go through the NBCT process because I know the power of reflecting on one's craft," Hicklin said.

Hicklin said teachers in her building know that seeking National Board certification is not an expectation for them. "But they do know that it's something that I hold as very important," she said.

Evans and Hicklin agree that they face some unique leadership challenges because they have so many leaders in one building.

"You have to be very, very in tune with what their issues are. You have to be very in tune with the resources they need to address their issues," Hicklin said.

Evans said, when a principal spreads leadership throughout a school, teachers will expect to reap the benefit of that by having a real voice in building decisions. "That's hard for principals. They've got to be willing to let go of that dictatorship kind of thing. When you give teachers leadership opportunities, you have to be willing to go with the decisions they make. The danger is that they make some decisions that I don't agree with. There are some things where I put my foot down and say that we have to do it this way but usually we try to reach a compromise. We're all in the business of educating children and that keeps us focused on doing the right thing," she said.

Both Evans and Hicklin believe their ability to govern their schools well has been enhanced because of their National Board experience.

"As a teacher, I had always had a good teaching experience. But I never had an administrator who had a depth of understanding about the craft of teaching. My knowing and their knowing that I know makes a big difference in how we do our work around here," said Hicklin who was also recognized as her district's Teacher of the Year before she sought National Board certification. "I try to lead with the knowledge of what they're going through," she said.

"If you've ever had an administrator who never achieved excellence as a teacher, you know that they can't bluff their way through getting others to think that they know a lot about accomplished teaching. Excellent teachers know," Hicklin said.

FACING GLOBAL ISSUES

By Adam Dodge and Mike Johnston,
American School Of Doha

Schools continue to face the challenge of preparing students for the future that changes at an exponential rate. Students are faced with a new world economy, technological advances and environmental challenges at a scale never experienced in human history. If we are to effectively equip our students for the 21st century, we must provide a curriculum and school structure that not only models, but leads with skills in critical-problem solving, communication, and responsible stewardship.

The future's concerns are upon us and we, as individuals and as schools, need to face them. We already have the knowledge and ability to address global issues; and we already have recipes for building and sustaining harmonious and productive living and working environments. What we need to do now is to give students opportunities to get involved, and to act.

The first place students can exercise

good stewardship is within the school structure itself and its connectedness to the community as a whole. School curriculum should be intertwined with community service ventures, in both the public and private sectors.

Teachers and the administration at the **American School of Doha** are helping to ensure that global citizenship, community service and environmental education are integral to the daily life of the entire school community, adults and student's. A core group of 24 teachers representing K-12 have formed **ASD EduCare**. This group is committed to realizing three specific goals:

1. Creating a cleaner greener school
2. Embedding global and environmental issues into the K-12 curriculum
3. Creating and sustaining action projects and service programs

An integral aspect to EduCare is building sustainable partnerships with other schools, NGO's, corpora-

tions, professionals and service projects. These partnerships provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills in real world settings.

Many NESAs schools share ASD's EduCare goals and already provide opportunities for their students to make a positive contribution to the world around them, both locally and globally. Participants at the Global Issues Network workshop at the Spring Educators Conference in Athens last April shared information and their enthusiasm for these initiatives. While many great programs, clubs, projects, units of study and courses already exist they are often segregated from one another and are not part of the curriculum.

To further its goals, ASD EduCare has created a central resource. It has also created a NESAs virtual school site as a way to gather, share and disseminate information. EduCare is already contacting and networking with many institutions within Doha to enrich the students' experiences.

The next step for EduCare is to

gather a critical mass of schools in the region that feel they can commit themselves to helping establish a NESAs network. This may take such forms as conferences, workshops, idea shares, creating databases, e-communities, and sharing resources. NESAs EduCare will be introduced to administrators and other school leaders at the Fall Leadership Conference in Bangkok. ASD is also committing to hosting a symposium in late November 2007 in Doha to establish the foundation of a sustainable network. Schools are invited to participate at the ground level to create this much needed and worthwhile endeavor.

If you believe, as we do, that this type of networking and collaboration can work at your school and at the NESAs level, join us!

"A vision without action is but a dream, Action without vision is a waste of time. But Vision with action can change lives" **Greg Henry Quinn**

adodge@asd.edu.qa

mjohnston@asd.edu.qa



"We teach them that the world can be an unpredictable, dangerous, and sometimes frightening place, while being careful not to spoil their lovely innocence. It's tricky."

Great Quotes by Great Ladies!

"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back."

Maya Angelou

"In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man - if you want anything done, ask a woman."

Margaret Thatcher

"Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission."

Eleanor Roosevelt

The Optimal Match Program at the Stavros Niarchos Learning Center

By The Optimal Match Team, ACS Athens

Saturday, May 12, 2007 marked the official grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony of the **Stavros Niarchos Learning Center** in conjunction with the 2nd Annual Conference "Celebrating Learning Differences". The event took place at the **American Community School of Athens**, Greece. The turnout was successful thanks to the hard work and dedication of those involved. Over two hundred and thirty people showed up to further their knowledge on learning differences. The participants varied from special educators, psychologists, counselors, parents, students, and those in the community who share an interest in this field.

Professionals from many disciplines of education, attended the various lectures and speakers came from across the globe to share their experiences and expertise, with all those attending. The topics presented covered many different aspects of education, such as Sensory Integration, Accommodations for Successful Learning, Understanding ADD/ADHD etc.

The ribbon cutting ceremony was organized by the parents of students who receive services at the Optimal Match Center. Members of the **Stavros Niarchos Foundation**, created in memory of the late Stavros Niarchos,

were present to celebrate the success of the completion of a hard year's work. Mr. Niarchos' dream was to improve the quality of life for people in Greece and across the globe. The Foundation provides funding for unique and innovative programs in the field of education, and was keen on being part of the existing Optimal Match Learning Center. Therefore, after much hard work, a whole floor of the school was completely renovated. The Foundation provided the funds for new computers, furniture, software programs and books...

Dr. Gialamas, the Head of Schools at ACS, along with the representative from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, officially cut the ribbon after the keynote speaker, **Dr. Duncan Rollo** of the **Centre Academy in London**, gave his opening remarks...

The Optimal Match program is headed by **Christiana Perakis**, and consists of **Anna Liasidis**, **Renee Koutras**, and **Sarah Kaldelli**. The Stavros Niarchos Learning Center offers support to students with mild learning difficulties or special learning needs. The aim of the Optimal Match team is to facilitate the learning process in order for students to be successful in school...

acs@acs.gr



Dr. Gialamas and a representative from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.



Christiana Perakis at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

ACS Beirut Was Well Represented at the Spring Conference in Athens

By Amira Hachem, Teacher Rep, ACS Beirut

Over the Spring Break, twenty-two **ACS Beirut** teachers and administrators attended the annual Spring NESAs Conference that was held in Athens, Greece from March 31st to April 2nd 2007. The school, which has fully sponsored three workshops, provided another seventeen professional development grants to support teachers in attending the NESAs conference in Athens.

During the course of the three-day conference, our teachers presented and had the chance to attend a variety of workshops/institutes designed to help professionals improve their day-to-day performances inside the classroom. As usual, our ACS workshops were a huge success, and our presenters received several compliments for a job well done! In addition to that, many subject coordi-

nators and teachers from other international schools in the region expressed their interest in attending our Mini-NESAs conference, held annually on the ACS Beirut campus. Their enthusiasm prompted ACS to start planning for the next Mini-NESAs conference!

Attending the conference was a fruitful and a rich learning experience to all of us. This would not have been possible if it wasn't for the generous contribution of the NESAs staff's time and effort to make that Spring NESAs Conference a great success, again, this year!

Our sincere congratulations to **Evienoula El-Assad**, **Sawsan Yaseen**, and **Sandra Yazbeck** on their fantastic job as presenters, and appreciation goes to all who attended the conference, and the ACS administration who made it easy for teachers to attend.



SEC delegates at Larnaca airport.

For more School News articles, go to NESAs NEWS on the NESAs website: www.nesacenter.org

QUACKFEST 2007

By Philip Roberts, Qatar Academy

During the academic year 2005–2006, Qatar Academy's Student Leadership Council conceived of a weekend "family fun day" to raise money for charity. The students chose the name QUACKFEST (Qatar's Ultimate Art, Community & Creativity Festival) and set about planning, designing and creating every aspect of the event. Students organized games, performances and competitions recruiting sponsors and student volunteers...

For the inaugural event, the designated target of the fundraising was a local, long-established community theatre organization "The Doha Players", which was in the process of raising funds to rebuild its theatre. QUACKFEST was a great success (raising enough

money for a complete rebuild of the theatre) and the students were only too keen to make 2007 even more successful.

Friday April 20th saw the second annual QUACKFEST take place in the buildings and grounds of Qatar Academy. The organizing students were ably supported by their teachers, staff from Qatar Foundation and Qatar Academy's Parent Teacher Association.

The event was a great success attracting nearly 1,000 visitors... Guests experienced live music, traditional Qatari food, rugby and football competitions, as well as the many games and competitions designed and run by the students of QA.

This year we raised 50,000QR for our chosen charities boosted by a generous donation from **Alfardan Auto-**



Fundraising at Quackfest.

mobiles. The money will be equally divided between three charities chosen by the students; **The Afghan Women and Children's Educational Center** (Kabul), a Primary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and **Qatar Charity**.

Students are already busily planning next year's event and one 9th grade student has elected to make "How to organize the perfect QUACKFEST" the focus of her MYP Personal Project.

A Double Feature for Aspiring Writers

By Jesse Remington, ACS – Abu Dhabi,
Middle School Technology Coordinator

The **American Community School of Abu Dhabi** and **American School of Dubai** teamed up to host two weeks of author visits in March this year. **Suzanne Fisher Staples** and **Kathleen Duey** joined the schools as writers in residence, with each author devoting one week to each venue. They shared their inspirations and experience as professional writers, and helped the students build their own stories and story ideas.

Suzanne Fisher Staples has spent many years working in

Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, as an international journalist. She has also worked with the **United States Agency for International Development**, helping to assess the lives of rural women in Pakistan. She has gained significant literary acclaim for her portrayal of communities and cultures in South Asia, and won a **Newbery Honor Award** for her novel, *Shabanu*.

Kathleen Duey is the author of more than 50 books, including the internationally popular *Hoofbeats* and *Unicorn's Secret* series.

The staff and administration of ACS and ASD would like to thank NESAs for their generous contribution to help fund this year's writers in residence program.

jesse-remington@acs.sch.ae



Kathleen Duey is a supportive hands-on presence in the classroom.

Jim Valley Jams at Lincoln School

By Monica Justice, French & Spanish
Teacher, Lincoln School, Nepal

From 1st-3rd March, **Jim Valley**, the "International Pied Piper", whose songs have helped hundreds of thousands of children all over the world to open up and express themselves, visited **Lincoln School**.

If you happened to catch one of his presentations, you would likely agree that it was a treat to see the Elementary students jamming with Jim and singing the songs that he has created with kids all over the world; many of them in international schools like Lincoln. "Add Your Happiness", "Rain Forest", "The Rainbow Planet", and "The Funky Monkey" were among their favorites.

At the songwriter's workshop, students

brought in poems with the theme of "insects" that were discussed and then set to music. Jim recorded their work together and has now put them to music. He will be sending the CD back to us and, if we are lucky, our song will be included on his next CD.

At the March 3rd community concert in the Globe Theater, Jim Valley had quite a crowd of parents and children from Lincoln School, **British School** and **Rato Bangala** moving to the rhythm of his happy songs. Jim Valley was a member of the rock and roll band, Paul Revere and the Raiders. Revisiting his work from this era, he treated us to "Spish-Splash" and "Rockin Robin". The audience could hardly keep still and stood to dance to these 1960's classics.



Jim Valley with students of Lincoln School.

This was Jim's fourth visit to Lincoln School. The school, Kathmandu, and Nepal in general are very special places for him so he hopes to return again in the near future. Jim Valley then traveled

on to Dhaka, Mumbai and New Delhi to meet, sing and jam with the kids and teachers at **AISD**, **ISB** and **AES**.