

# The Learning Network

*A Newsletter for Districts and High Schools Engaged in Redesign Work*

March 2008 | Volume 6 Issue 3

## Save the Dates!

**July 23-27, 2008**  
**Mt. Rainier High School**  
**Highline School District**

Attend our July 23 Summer Symposium to hear noted educator and author **Kathleen Cushman**, University of Washington College of Education Dean **Patricia Wasley**, and others.

Sign up for two-, three- and four-day seminars and institutes on service learning, small schools, system redesign, and Critical Friends Groups held during the same week.

For more information about these learning opportunities, sponsored by the **Coalition of Essential Schools Northwest** and the **Small Schools Project**, go to [www.cesnw.org](http://www.cesnw.org).

## New Resources

*Searching for Coherence*, an article by several of our staff members, explores issues in systems change in education. Published in the CES journal *Horace*, this article is available on our website, [www.smallschoolsproject.org](http://www.smallschoolsproject.org).

A new book, *Architecture for Achievement: Building Patterns for Small School Learning*, helps those involved in school building or conversion make decisions that support student learning. For more information, go to [www.archachieve.net](http://www.archachieve.net).

## A Call for Personalization

*By Rick Lear, Director*

This issue of *The Learning Network* addresses one component of school redesign: *how schools might design for personalization as a primary strategy for improving student accomplishment.*

We believe personalization lies at the heart of good schools. Done well, personalization permits students and teachers alike to turn the profound human desire for connection to others into a powerful tool for learning. Absent a serious commitment to personalization, our experience thus far shows us that reform efforts lead only to modest change and modest improvement—scarcely worth the enormous effort.

Schools and their districts across the country have taken three primary routes to personalizing learning experiences for their students. This issue's articles illustrate each of these routes: converting existing comprehensive high schools into smaller, more personalized schools; creating a new, free-standing school (this one using a national design); or modifying aspects of existing high school design. Each strategy holds promise, but their ultimate success depends on each school's ability to attend carefully to design matters that will support personalization.

At the Small Schools Project, personalization has a particular meaning. In our three-year study of seven small high schools in Washington State, we found that when teachers knew students well, they were more likely to take responsibility for their students' learning. This led them to consider how they might change or tailor their instructional strategies to meet the needs of their individual kids.

Our definition suggests several critical components that must be in place to personalize:

- A structure that provides teachers with extended time with fewer students,
- A disposition and commitment on the part of adults to take the time and make the effort to know students well,
- An understanding that engagement on the part of the learner is a key component to learning,
- A curriculum that is standards-based but flexible regarding content and pedagogy,
- Pedagogical skills that allow teachers to turn knowing a student well into effective interpretations of curriculum and assessment, and
- Teacher authority to make adaptations to curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment based on what s/he knows about a particular student.

### ***Design decisions in the service of personalization***

Schools can make many design decisions to promote personalization: they can use block schedules to provide for longer periods of time, schedule advisories three to five times per week

for at least 30 minutes, provide teachers who teach the same students with a common planning period and so on. Arguably, however, the single most important design decision a school staff could make is to ensure that teachers and students work together long enough, and in sufficiently reduced numbers, to know one another well.

What people do, by design, is usually a reasonable indicator of what they value. Most

### ***Personalization Defined***

We define personalization as making a difference when these conditions occur:

- Students... are known and have a sense of belonging that sustains *mutual trust* between the teacher and the student.
- Adults in the school know kids (and often families) so well that *instruction and learning opportunities can be tailored to individual students* based on that knowledge.
- Students trust teachers sufficiently to grant their teachers the *moral authority to make greater demands on them as learners.*

*Knowing and Being Known: Personalization as a Foundation for Student Learning*, Lambert et al 2004. This report can be downloaded from [www.smallschoolsproject.org](http://www.smallschoolsproject.org).

teachers today work in schools that make it likely that they will have a student load of 600 or 1200 or 1800 students over the course of four years. Such a design makes personalization virtually impossible.

## A simple step: looping

Fortunately, almost any school that uses courses as the primary means of organizing the school can take one simple step toward personalization. They can loop teachers with students for two or more years. Looping, which does not reduce a teacher's student load in any one year, does reduce the student load by at least 50 percent over two years—a significant reduction. Further reductions occur by looping three or four years in a row.

*Here's how:*

**Schedule basics.** Most high schools operate on some variation of a six- or eight-period schedule.

In a six-period schedule (Figure 1), most teachers teach five periods and have one planning period, and classes usually contain about 30 students. The typical student load for a teacher, then, is 150 students at a time. (For the sake of simplicity, teacher-planning periods, “duty” periods, and lunch periods are not included in the graphics, though they remain a real part of teachers' daily lives.)

In an eight-period schedule (Figure 2), most teachers teach six periods, have one planning period, and either lunch, a second

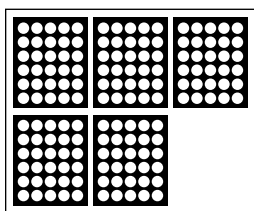


Fig. 1: Six-period schedule

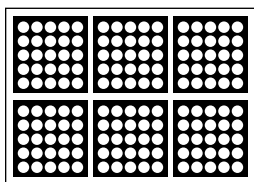


Fig. 2: Eight-period schedule

planning period, or an extra duty of some sort. Classes typically contain about 25 students, and the typical student load for a teacher is, once again, 150 students at a time.

A school using a block schedule, with longer classes meeting daily for a semester, will reduce the teacher's student load to 75 students for a semester—certainly an improvement. The second semester, however, presents another 75 students, so the total student load for a year is, once again, 150 students.

In a school operating with year-long courses in the core areas, those teachers will have a minimum of 150 students per year. (This discussion assumes no student mobility, since it varies so widely. The higher the rate of

## What are design decisions, and why do they matter?

Design decisions are those decisions made about the structure, organization, and operation of a school that have the potential to affect significantly the nature and quality of student learning. Most decisions made during the process of building or renovating a school are, obviously, important design decisions. So are deciding to place ninth grade classes, or the social studies department, on one floor or wing of a school.

Other design decisions are often less obvious and arguably far more critical, and go to the heart of school culture and possibility. Who teaches what to whom, and for how long? Is that teaching done in collaboration with one or more colleagues or in isolation? Are teachers specialists or generalists? Will the school have a clear focus, or will it attempt to offer some of everything to students? How many students will a teacher work with in a year's time, or in two years, or four?

Design decisions such as these largely determine whether students have a coherent or fragmented experience in high school. They also determine whether a student has 10-20 teachers in four years of high school or 30-70 within a conventional, course-based school design.

student mobility, however, the greater the teacher's student load.)

In reality, most core teachers will have more than 150 students. Since many, if not most, electives are offered for only a semester, a student's elective choices often force a scheduler to move a student from one section of a math class to another—and often to another teacher.

Since most schools do not design for personalization, it is quite likely that a teacher will have a different 150 students each year. Over four years, that number rises to 600 students as shown in Figure 3.

If a school operates on a semester basis, a teacher could have a 300-student load in a year, or 1200 different students over four years. If a school operates on a trimester basis, the numbers shift to possibly a 450-student load per year, or 1800 different students. While neither possibility is likely, it will happen occasionally because the school's design permits it.

**Halving the numbers.** In any academic area, a school can reduce the student load for a teacher by 50 to 75 percent simply by looping—having a teacher stay with the same students for

two or more years.

While looping is common in elementary grades, it happens only occasionally in high schools, and usually by chance rather than design. In high school, looping means that a teacher teaches two (or more) year-long courses that are taught sequentially, and that students have the same teacher for both courses. For instance, a teacher will teach English 9 and English 10, Algebra II and Calculus, American History and World History, Integrated Science and Biology 1, Spanish III and Spanish IV, and so on. Figure 4 illustrates the reduced student load realized from looping.

**Another way to halve the numbers.** In some teaching areas, it is possible to reduce a teacher's student load by integrating courses from two disciplines. Combining English and social studies courses is the most common form of curriculum integration, but some schools have integrated math and science, science and social studies, social studies and art, or English and art. Integration depends on a teacher having, or acquiring, dual certification—not uncommon among high school teachers.

Curriculum integration, while less common than looping, yields an even greater reduction in student load. Rather than teaching six different classes in the same discipline to 150

students, a teacher works with 75 students, but teaches two subjects in an integrated course that meets for twice the time. *Figure 5* illustrates what this teacher's student load looks like.

**Half again.** For those schools that combine looping and integration, the reduction in student load for teachers is reduced to 75 students over two years, or 150 students over four years, as shown in *Figure 6*.

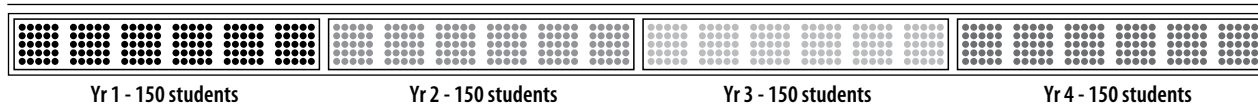
**Student load and time.** Two-year looping not only cuts in half the student load, but it also doubles the amount of time a teacher works with the same set of students. Rather than having four wholly or largely different sets of students over four years, a teacher works with two sets of students, which translates to 300 hours rather than 150 hours for each set of students, as is currently the case with a six-period day. The result is *half the students, twice the time over two years*. To see this in the illustrations below, consider the blocks holding the classes of students to be blocks of time. As student load decreases, the block of time available to each set of students increases.

## Personalization in the service of improved student learning

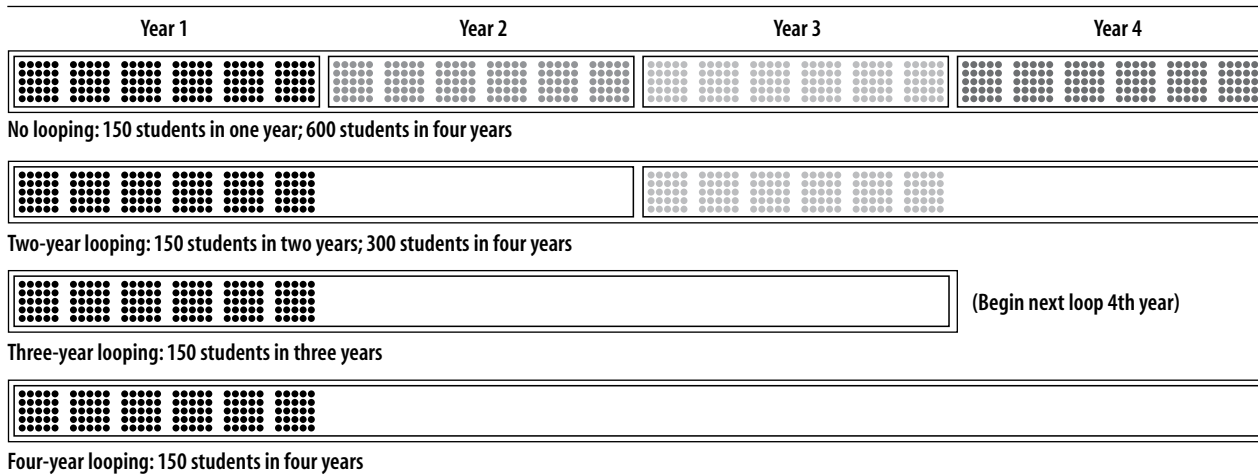
No one change will solve all the problems facing our high schools. However, our research and that of others strongly suggests that greater personalization leads to greater teacher awareness of students' needs and commitment to their academic success. One small example...a teacher who was interviewed for our report, *Knowing and Being Known*, described how increased personalization was impacting [her] instructional strategies for one student: "I had a kid who wasn't responding to anything at all, but he was really good at history. So you start talking. Can he do some kind of a project? Now that kid who wasn't doing his assignments is doing an independent study for [credit] as a math/history project."

The goal for the schools in this issue is to ensure that all students benefit from that kind of personalization. While no single design decision can guarantee that high levels of personalization will occur, looping and curricular integration can make such experiences far more likely for far more students.

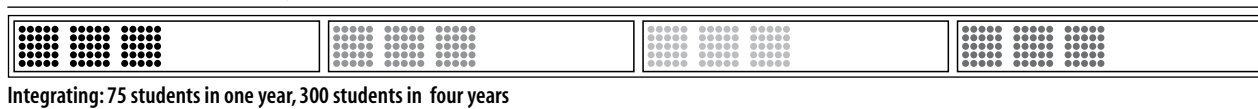
**Fig. 3: Typical student load over four years**



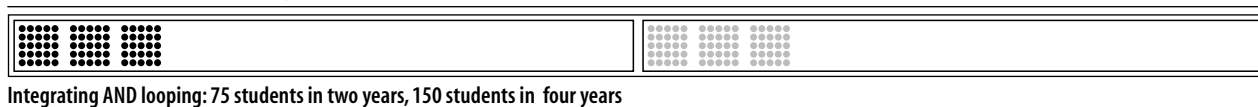
**Fig. 4: Student load reduced by looping**



**Fig. 5: Student load reduced by curriculum integration**



**Fig. 6: Student load reduced by looping and integration**



## Kennewick's Phoenix High School Opens Doors

Across the country, while big traditional high schools are engaged in looking at ways to personalize learning for their students, hundreds of districts are also creating new small schools. In September 2007, a new small school called Phoenix High School\* opened with 40 students in the Kennewick School District, an Eastern Washington district with 15,000 students. Based on the EdVisions model, Phoenix offers an engaging project-based curriculum to 40 students in grades 9 through 12. This article includes the perspective of Phoenix students and a district administrator as well as reflections from Phoenix director and lead advisor Tracy Money.



Phoenix students work on their projects together—and alone—in spaces closely replicating the world of work.

### Supporting a New Small School: A District's Role

According to Debbie McClary, Kennewick's Director of Career and Technical Education, Phoenix High School was established because "we realized we didn't have enough options to effectively serve many of our high school students."

In 2005-06, a district committee made up of community members, teachers, administrators (including Debbie and Tracy), and a board member began meeting to discuss and research alternative options. The committee divided into small groups to research and visit small schools and then presented their findings to the larger group, which chose the project-based EdVisions model as the best fit for Kennewick.

Starting up Phoenix High School has required flexibility on the part of EdVisions and the district. "A lot of tweaking has happened," Debbie says. Most EdVisions schools are charters, so establishing Phoenix in a non-charter state meant having different conversations. She notes, "It's fortunate that EdVisions encourages 'tweaking' to fit the local context."

District flexibility has included union and supervisory issues (Debbie evaluates Phoenix's two teachers) as well as the willingness to allocate resources. "Starting a new small school may seem more expensive if you are just looking at putting kids back into existing options, but if you look at the cost benefit—at the kids you may be losing—it's probably not," she says.

Debbie believes that one important district contribution can be "just supporting 'difference' and giving it time." She explains, "This type of curriculum [project-based] is so different, when something goes wrong, you have to resist the temptation to come back to what you are more familiar and comfortable with." She says that the district will be collecting data from Phoenix, while at the same time looking for new space for the projected expansion of the school from 40 students to 80 next year.

Finally, Debbie notes that finding the right leaders may be the most important district contribution to starting a new small school. "You can have any model you want," she says, "but if you don't have

### EdVisions Schools

The EdVisions Schools model offers a fundamentally different approach designed to address the needs of 21st century learners, preparing all students for college, careers, and global citizenship. In small democratic learning communities, students engage in rigorous and relevant projects that connect to the real world. For more information, go to [www.edvisions.com](http://www.edvisions.com).

the right leaders, you have less chance for success. We are so fortunate—Tracy Money and Jill Mulhausen are extraordinary and passionate teachers."

\*Phoenix is the 8th new freestanding small school opened in Washington State since 2001 with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

### When Learners are in Relationship

*Reflections by Tracy Money  
Director and Lead Advisor  
Phoenix High School, Kennewick*

Phoenix High School was founded on the belief that a learning environment centered on relationships, relevance, rigor, and reflection fosters a passion for lifelong learning and empowers students to become responsible members of their community and the world. It's a democratic learning community where student voice is honored. Students and staff have spent our first four months building community and putting in place learning structures that support our beliefs.

Relationships and reflection bookend the daily schedule. Twenty-minute morning and afternoon advisories are incubators of thought. It is protected space in which students test ideas and ask questions without fear of ridicule.

Students are involved in 30 minutes of sustained silent reading each day. They reflect on that reading in two entries per week in their dialogue journals. Advisors [what we teachers are called at Phoenix] respond to those journals weekly.

Every day before afternoon advisory, students engage in 20 minutes of written reflection on their learning for the day. They use this time to celebrate successes, air frustrations, ask questions, analyze work patterns, and set goals. Advisors respond to each reflection in writing every night to build relationships and model good reflective habits.

Weekly Socratic Seminar groups, composed of students from different advisories, provide opportunities to hear other voices and grapple with rigorous text and ideas from the works of many big thinkers—from Simon and Garfunkel to Blaise Pascal.



Phoenix's philosophy and structure allow (teacher) advisors Tracy Money and Jill Mulhausen (left to right) to provide personalization that supports their students.

Advisors encourage metacognitive conversation in project proposal conferences, project coaching conversations, and when a community issue must be resolved through group process. Such conversations are opportunities to look at evidence, explore alternate points of view and make connections to other learning.

As director and lead advisor at Phoenix, I have learned as much as the students. It is a blessing to facilitate interdisciplinary learning for the same students all day long. Intellectual growth increases exponentially when learners are in relationship—with caring mentors who know them well and recognize their needs, with their passions, with big ideas, and with other learners who simultaneously support and validate their thinking and challenge their ideas. Where strong relationships and ongoing reflection exist, relevance and rigor are natural byproducts.

Students are beginning to internalize and apply quality habits of mind, work,

### Thinking About Opening a New Small School?

When Tracy was asked what she would say to other educators who might be considering opening new small schools, her first response was, "There is way too much to share!" Then she continued:

- I want others to see the **impact of the school schedule on personalization**—how when you have the power to change that structure, real personalization becomes possible.
- I want them to know that **self-directed project-based learning works for all kinds of kids**—gifted students, SPED students, at-risk students, and everything in between.
- I want them to know the **real challenges in being different**—hiring, for example. The Phoenix program requires hiring generalists, hard to find at the secondary level. It's hard to find a quality teacher—someone who teaches kids rather than subjects—with endorsements in multiple areas. I am blessed to work alongside Jill Mulhausen, a dynamite teacher who embraces acting as a generalist facilitating learning for students.
- I want them to know the **importance of quality partnerships**. It is much easier to walk the path of education reform when others have walked before you and cleared some brush. EdVisions has provided us with an amazing and supportive network. Sister schools have shared resources and advice—including struggles as well as successes. The Small Schools Project has provided stellar coaching support and planning resources.
- Most of all, I want to encourage others that in spite of the challenges, they need to **jump in and provide other options for kids**. The other day, our Small Schools coach and I were thinking about where our kids would be at this point in the school year in a traditional school; most would be floundering or have disappeared. Instead, they are finding their way and developing confidence.

wellness, service, and community. They are less inclined to wait for an answer to be handed to them—more inclined to recognize that the tools for finding answers exist within. They ask better questions and are beginning to accept that not knowing something is OK. They don't shy away as quickly from tough questions in advisory or Socratic Seminar. Project proposals demonstrate students choosing depth. Their questions are authentic and they engage in serious work to discover the answers. Oh, the power of that!

### A Way "Into" Learning: Student Perspectives

Sophomore Dylan Hayes was sitting in his counselor's office ("in trouble, as usual," he recalls) last year when he glanced up at a bulletin board and saw an application for Phoenix High School.

A big school clearly wasn't working for him, so he showed the application to his math teacher (and family friend). The teacher encouraged Dylan to apply,

but warned him that he "shouldn't see Phoenix as just an easy way out."

It hasn't been. Instead, Phoenix has been a way "in" for Dylan to connect learning with his passion—music—and in the process, to "touch all the same subjects and earn more credits...than I would in regular school." The junior notes that now he reads and writes every day. And when he designs his projects, he reviews Washington State's EALRs (Essential Academic Learning Requirements) to select those that relate to his intended learning.

Sophomore Becca Gibson is also working harder than she had previously. At one point, she'd dropped out of school altogether. At Phoenix, she likes "getting to learn what we want to learn about" at her own pace, although she admits that being in charge of her own learning was a challenge at first. "It's all up to you. If you don't do the work, you don't get the credit," she explains. She's currently working on a photography project with

*(continued on page 6)*



Becca Gibson



Dylan Hayes

a student partner but hopes to become a music journalist someday.

Becca and Dylan point to the close relationships they've developed with their advisers as another big plus and a reason that Phoenix is a good fit. "Tracy and Jill really connect to us," says Dylan.

Thanks to the relationships, relevance, and rigor Dylan has encountered at Phoenix, he hasn't spent any time in

the counselor's office this year. He and his class partner wrote a grant to Youth Venture, a student project funding organization, traveled to another town to present their proposal before a selection panel, and been notified that the proposal—to start a recording studio—was accepted. This spring Dylan will be working hard to complete the project—and learning while he does.

## Redesigning a Schedule to Support

The Nooksack Valley School District has been redesigning itself for almost ten years, most notably by focusing on strengthening instructional practice, which has led to accompanying curricular and culture changes.

Like many other districts, Nooksack Valley began with intensive work in elementary schools on literacy and then math, and worked its way "up" the system to middle school, then high school. Because high schools are more complex units, improving instructional practice has involved some key structural changes.

Nooksack Valley High School has operated on an eight-period block schedule for over a decade in spite of its added costs, in large part to provide a broader range of electives for its students. Last year, when the schedule review committee at the 550-student school (located near the Canadian border in rural Washington State), members asked, "How does our schedule support student learning, and how does it not?"

At the same time, the high school had begun serious work redesigning its high school math program. That effort was multi-faceted, and included adopting the Interactive Mathematics Program (IMP) and providing intensive embedded math coaching for teachers (first to learn the new curriculum, then to change teaching practice). Equally important, math teachers were provided common planning time, something the school had provided the 9th and 10th grade teachers for a couple of years.

After the schedule review, the eight-period block schedule remained, but school leaders made two key decisions designed to take advantage of the flexibility provided by that schedule, says principal Matt Galley.

### **Double blocking ninth-grade math**

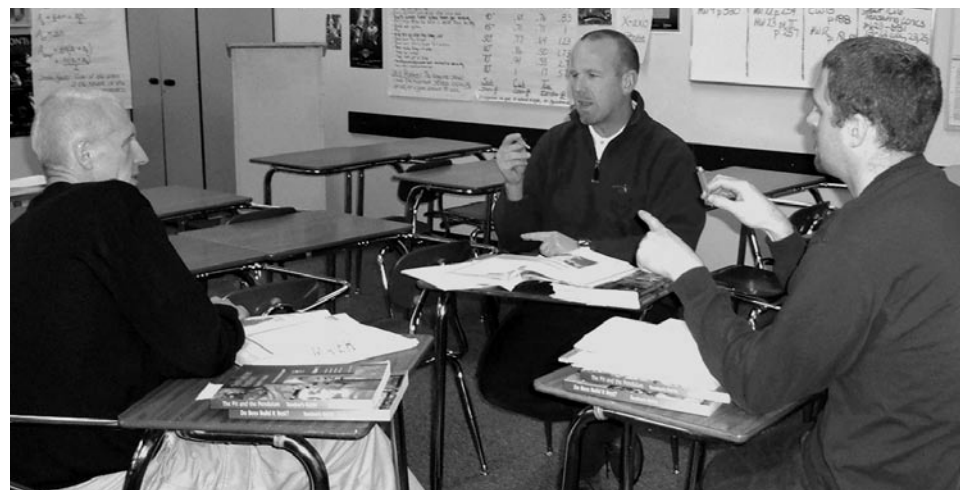
Graduating each student ready for college-level math had replaced passing the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) as the school's target. So the first decision was to double block the ninth grade entry-level math course, as a way to strengthen substantially the math skills of each student, not simply the struggling ones.

The double blocking meant ninth-grade students would have math every day—a move that math teachers Terry Maier, Tyler Mitchell, and Jim Ramer-

man agree makes sense for these kids new to high school. Not only is it easier for teachers to hold kids accountable and for students to retain information, but as Jim says, "It also increases our chance to build relationships. We get to know [our students] at a deeper level. I believe we are pulling along some kids who might have fallen through the cracks."

### **Providing professional learning communities**

The second decision was to place all high school teachers in professional learning communities (PLCs) for one of their two planning periods. Insofar as possible, teachers are assigned to PLCs by discipline, with some elective areas combining to form a PLC. Previously, some PLC work had been done on most of the district's late arrival days scattered across the year. *(continued on back page)*



Math teachers Terry Maier, Jim Ramerman, and Tyler Mitchell plan their next-day lessons.

# Evergreen Becomes Highline's Second Conversion Campus

This fall, three new small schools opened on the Evergreen campus in the Highline School District in Washington State. They are: Arts & Academics Academy, Health Sciences & Human Services High School, and the Technology, Engineering, & Communications School. These schools have between 325 and 350 students each and are implementing a variety of strategies (e.g., advisories, internships, mentoring programs, etc.) to increase personalization.

Evergreen is the second Highline comprehensive high school to divide into small schools. In 2005, three small schools opened on the Tye campus. For more information, see the Highline School District website, [www.hsd401.org](http://www.hsd401.org).



In cold Northwest rain, hardy Arts and Academics Academy students (from left to right) Ritche Long, Jennifer Thao, Samuel Snyder, and Amanda Ngeth cluster with their principal Vic Anderson (far right) around their small school sign.

## Arts & Academics Academy

The goal of the Arts & Academics Academy is to integrate all content courses with the arts, to emphasize creativity and critical thinking, and to provide opportunities for students to share their work publicly. One of these opportunities is the twice-yearly "Arts Night Extravaganza" in which students showcase their academic work and perform in drama, music, dance, and other literary arts ensembles.

Every incoming ninth and tenth grade student cycles through an Arts Core Curriculum—a four-semester sequence that includes courses in visual art, drama, dance, and digital design. In addition, all students belong to small grade-level advisories that meet four times a week and provide academic, social, and emotional

support as well as preparation for life after high school.

## Health Sciences & Human Services High School (H3)

The Health Sciences & Human Services High School features a college preparatory curriculum that enables students to pursue excellence in academic subjects and careers. According to principal Paula Montgomery, "The mission of H3 is to prepare our students to be competent and self-sufficient individuals, who seek to better themselves through learning and service to others."

This fall, a senior retreat included time for help with senior year activities such as college applications and culminating projects, as well as time for one-on-one conversations with staff and a challenging ropes exercise. Student feedback ranged from "What really worked for me was the one-on-one help I got" to "The thing I liked best was the ropes course and



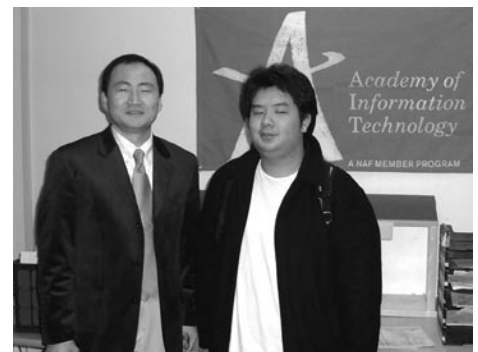
H3 seniors and staff members gather at Camp Waskowitz (the Highline District's outdoor learning camp) during a two-day retreat.

working together as a team...and talking about what barriers were holding us back" to "I now know what I need to do and what to work on to be successful in school and in life."

## Technology, Engineering, & Communications School (Evergreen-TEC)

The goal of the Technology, Engineering & Communications School is to provide a rigorous and relevant academic education in a pre-engineering environment that allows students to transition successfully into post-secondary and career choices. To that end, the school will be working with companies such as the Boeing Company to establish on-the-job internships. The school has also recently formed new clubs in robotics, women writers, tech-know, and video game design to provide deeper after-school experiences for students.

A New York City-based business-academic group, National Academy Foundation (NAF) selected TEC as one of only 13 schools in the nation as a pilot site for its Academy of Engineering. As a pilot site, the school received a start-up grant for a program that will enable students to take—on top of their normal courses—an additional engineering class or two. Entrance into the program will not be based on test scores or grades; any interested student can enroll.



While the banner behind principal Eric Hong and student Kevin Saephan is not their small school's signage, it represents a major honor the school recently received from the National Academy Foundation (NAF).

# The Learning Network

*A Newsletter for Districts and High Schools Engaged in Redesign Work*

# TLN



7900 E. Greenlake Dr. N.  
Suite 212  
Seattle, WA 98103  
Tel: 206-812-3160  
[www.smallschoolsproject.org](http://www.smallschoolsproject.org)

## In This Issue:

**A Call for Personalization**

**Redesigning a Schedule to Support Student Learning**

**Kennewick's Phoenix High School Opens Doors**

**Evergreen Becomes Highline's Second Conversion Campus**

*(Redesigning a Schedule — continued from page 6)*

This PLC decision came as a result of seeing the benefits of common planning for the 9-10 English teachers, who had requested the time, and the math teachers, who were assigned the time. Both groups believed they had grown professionally as a result, and building and district leaders agreed. Several other teachers were also interested in working together in PLCs.

For the math teachers, having shared planning time has been “absolutely essential,” says Terry, because the department has been implementing a new curriculum. He explains, “Every time we taught something that first year, it was completely new. We spend our time debriefing the past lessons, planning future lessons, and writing the common assessments that we give.”

A fourth-year teacher, Tyler says that he especially needs counsel from his more experienced colleagues. “If I had to rely on five-minute conversations in the hall, I’d be having lots more struggles,” he says. However, Jim notes that “We are *all* internal

coaches, supporting each other.” Terry, Tyler, and Jim agree that the key to shared planning time is knowing how to use it well and that they are fortunate to function so well as a unit, taking on different roles and staying on task.

Matt Galley shares the teachers’ belief that just *having* time may not be enough. “Changing structures—like creating the double block or giving PLC time—won’t necessarily guarantee improved student learning,” he says.

He notes district walk-throughs as a key support for the schedule changes. Additionally, Matt and assistant principal Ralph Hayden work closely with the new PLCs to build a focus and continuity to their work. Matt notes that perhaps the most essential underlying support is the district’s clear vision and focus on instruction. “At every level, we hear that instruction is the key,” he says.

**The Learning Network** is a quarterly newsletter written and produced by the Small Schools Project, which is part of the Coalition of Essential Schools Northwest Center.

The Project was created in 2000 to promote the understanding and development of small schools committed to providing rigorous, relevant learning experiences for all students, based on powerful relationships that support this learning. We provide support and assistance to high schools and districts committed to high school redesign and graduating all students college- and work-ready.

The Project offers a range of services, including school and district coaching and professional development activities for educators and administrators. We publish a variety of publications about small schools and produce hands-on tools to use in the classroom, school, district, and community.

For more information about the Project, to subscribe to this newsletter or print a copy, please visit <http://www.smallschoolsproject.org>.

To share information about your district or school’s redesign efforts, or to suggest topics for this newsletter, please contact:

**Nancy Lundsgaard**, Editor/Writer (206) 812-3159 [nancy@cesnw.org](mailto:nancy@cesnw.org)

**Mary Beth Lambert**, Contributing Editor (206) 812-3157 [marybeth@cesnw.org](mailto:marybeth@cesnw.org)

Design: **Suzanne Helms Creative Services** (206) 910-3901 [shcs@comcast.net](mailto:shcs@comcast.net)