

MEMO

To: SERVE Board of Directors

From: Jack Sanders

Date: July 13, 2001

Re: Board Update

1. The dates for the fall meeting of the SERVE Board of Directors are November 13-14. The location is the Renaissance Charleston Hotel, 68 Wentworth Street, Charleston, SC. To reserve a room, please contact my assistant, Jan Moore. For airline reservations, call Mardy Murray of Prestige World Travel at 800-476-7737.

Please note that the format for this Board meeting is changed from previous meetings to reflect your feedback following our last two meetings. Many of you said you prefer weekday to weekend meetings so this meeting is Tuesday evening and Wednesday.

Many said condense the meeting schedule. We will have the usual opening reception for Board, staff, and local friends of SERVE on Tuesday evening, following an all-afternoon meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board. We will have the REL/SERVE meeting on Wednesday morning and the SERVE, Inc. meeting in the afternoon with our small group meetings following. Business will be completed by 5pm Wednesday.

So, unless you are on the Executive Committee, you can plan to arrive on Tuesday afternoon, November 13, and sample downtown Charleston before attending our reception from 5:30 until 7:00. I look forward to hearing your comments about the new meeting format. Expect to receive the agenda package approximately 10 days before the meeting.

2. Since our last meeting, we have negotiated a new memo of understanding with the Florida Department of Education, thanks to Ronda Federspiel. The memo includes a design for collaborative R&D work related to Commissioner of Education Charlie Crist's School Safety Initiative. Also in Florida, Ken Hamilton arranged for us to provide an orientation for our newest Florida board member, Heather Fiorentino, former teacher and current member of the state legislature.
3. For updates on our program work, please consult the SERVE website, www.serve.org. The website is a regular Internet stop for an increasing number of educators and policymakers. We are currently recording approximately 90,000 page views from site visitors each month. As you peruse the website, you will notice updates on a monthly basis. For example, in the last month substantial new information was added on:

- Comprehensive School Reform Development work in the states
- Extended Learning Opportunities Initiative
- SERVE publications
- a new national grants program on Teaching American History

We are also receiving requests from website managers of other organizations to include a link to our site. The most recent of these came from the editor-in-chief of Education World via staff member Ann Jolly.

4. Major SERVE events that will occur before our Board meeting include the co-sponsorship with UNC-Wilmington and Western Michigan University of the CREATE Evaluation Institute in Wilmington, NC on July 19-21. This event includes research presentations by several SERVE staff and a keynote address by SERVE partner, John Dornan. It will attract a national audience of more than 200 with an interest in education evaluation and assessment.

A second event to keep in mind is the Sixth Annual SERVE Regional Forum, October 21-23 in Charlotte, NC. That event showcases research-based school improvement work being carried out by educators from the Region. This event has grown over the years to 400-500 participants, including educators from outside the Region, exhibitors, and the media. For details on these and other events, please see the SERVE website.

5. By the time we next meet, I hope to have more definitive information on new/expanded SERVE office space in Atlanta and Tallahassee. Negotiations between UNCG and the building managers in both locations are underway. We have also added some additional space in our Greensboro offices, with assistance from Ed Uprichard.
6. SERVE has recently agreed to provide technical assistance to NC Governor Mike Easley's Education First Task Force. Several staff have attended public meetings of the task force and provided responses to requests for technical information and for leadership of small group discussions.

SERVE's policy analysts, located in each of our state capitals, are regularly called upon for services such as this. If you are not familiar with the SERVE policy analyst working in your state capital, please introduce yourself to them at the next Board meeting.

7. Let me conclude this memo with a listing of some of our recent publications and special recognitions. Please let Jan Moore or me know if you'd like more information about or a copy of any of these items.

- Our **SUNRAY technology project** shepherded by Elizabeth Byrum was the subject of a very complimentary two-page spread in Panorama Universidad Metropolitana, a publication of the Puerto Rico University System.

- In the last issue of the magazine, ASCD reported results from a survey of Education Leadership readers. Survey says . . . SERVE staff members Barbara Howard and Wendy McColskey's article "**Evaluating Experienced Teachers**" was one of the 12 MOST USEFUL articles!
- The Director of SERVE's Expanded Learning Opportunities project, Catherine Scott-Little, received an invitation from national Head Start officials to have SERVE co-sponsor the Fifth Annual Head Start Transition Conference.

Just off the press . . .

- **Growing a School System Second to None** is the story of the evolution of the Public School Forum of North Carolina. The Forum is a public policy center for education reform--the prototype of many such organizations in the Southeast. Each member-state of the SERVE Region has such an organization and all are affiliated with an umbrella organization, The Columbia Group, currently chaired by Forum Executive Director, John Dornan.
- **Factors Influencing the Effective Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning: Lessons Learned from the SEIR*TEC Intensive Site Schools.** In this second edition, SEIR*TEC staff shed some light on the factors that influence technology adoption by sharing some of the lessons learned and observations made while providing technical assistance and professional development to resource-poor schools across the region from 1995 to 2000. Accompanying each lesson are suggested steps that educators might take in order to move their technology programs forward as well as a story from one of the SEIR*TEC intensive site schools.
- **Newsire.** This quarterly newsletter highlights SEIR*TEC activities and services. The staff and partners of SEIR*TEC provide updates on national, state, and local technology initiatives, pre-service education activities, book reviews, articles on current educational technology issues, and other resources for effective technology integration.
- **The Vision.** SERVE's newsletter, published three times during the school year, is designed to meet the needs of educators in the Southeast by providing timely, informative articles for teachers, administrators, and policymakers at all levels of the education spectrum. Each issue provides the latest on "hot topics" in education, information about upcoming professional development and networking opportunities, and details of SERVE's variety of programs and institutes focused on school improvement.
- **Virtual Libraries in the Southeast.** In the past five years, each state in the SERVE region developed virtual libraries that provide its citizens access to licensed databases. This guide describes each state's offerings, including the methods of access, resources, and available help and

training; a primer in basic search conventions and strategies; and a list of suggested Internet search tools.

- **Making Resources Matter.** This boxed set of ten modules guides school districts as they develop a consolidated plan for program and resources. The modules address all components of the planning process and offer suggestions for developing a plan to use resources effectively. The series addresses particular issues and challenges related to district-wide planning.
- **NCHE Spanish Parent Packs.** The National Center for Homeless Education developed this attractive and convenient folder where children's records and documents can be stored. Amidst colorful pictures, the outside and inside folder covers include pertinent information to assist parents who move frequently.
- **NCHE Spanish Brochure.** This National Center for Homeless Education publication informs parents of their child's educational rights, provides questions for parents to ask the school, and gives NCHE's toll free help line number for further assistance.
- **Basics About Babies' Brain Development (English and Spanish Brochures).** This series of pamphlets, based on materials from the I Am Your Child campaign, gives parents and child care providers useful information about how the brain develops and ways to encourage a child's healthy development. The pamphlets are written in a basic, easy to read language and are also translated into Spanish.
- **Language, Discourse, and Learning in Science: Improving Professional Practice through Action Research.** Includes 14 action research studies undertaken by practicing elementary and middle school science teachers enrolled in a science education distance learning graduate program at Florida State University. The findings and processes described in these studies will prove beneficial to other teachers with similar challenges and interests in improving teaching and learning through action research in their own classrooms.