

Update

Director's



Executive Director Richard Sterling

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Every year, I look forward to the National Writing Project Annual Meeting. It's always a wonderful opportunity to learn together with directors and teachers from across the country. Our 2001 meeting in Baltimore was no exception, and I would like to congratulate everyone for a

spectacular conference. From our count, approximately 650 people participated in the

meeting, and, according to your comments, the workshops and presentations were enthusiastically received. It was particularly gratifying that so many people traveled to Baltimore during this period of uncertainty.

One reason I especially look forward to the annual meeting is that I meet many people in the network whom previously I have known by name only. Recently, I had the chance to learn even more than that about one of our directors when I was asked to participate in that director's tenure and promotion review. I agreed, and a few days later, I received a box with five books, several articles, and a monograph or two. "Oh, no," I thought, "How am I going to read all this in a month?"

Despite my apprehension, I sat down and began reading the materials that weekend. Much to my delight, I soon found myself deeply engaged and fascinated by the subject, the style, and the content of the various books and articles. This incident reminded me once again how much work directors do in addition to managing writing project sites and how much there is to learn from our current network and the new directors and teacher-consultants who join the writing project each year.

As I thought about it, I realized how important it is to make use of the richness of writing project people and resources. The better we get at doing this, the stronger the network will be. And due to circumstances currently unfolding for NWP, this year may be the perfect time to make this our focus. First, we have just received news of an increase in funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Second, our research and evaluation work is beginning to reveal some interesting and favorable information about the project. In light of these circumstances, we will need to think strategically—now more than ever—about increasing the breadth and depth of our work and conducting ongoing evaluation of that work.

To move toward these goals, we will definitely need to learn more about the research that directors and teacher-consultants are already doing. Many writing project people are writing books and articles about which the rest of the network knows very little. Think about the materials that you or others at your site have written that might be best shared with the organization: articles, books, and monographs on the teaching of writing, composition, and literacy; books on assessment and evaluation that deal with literacy, reading, writing, and teaching; work on the intersection of standards and curriculum; and, of course, work that demonstrates how powerful professional development affects teaching and learning, both for teachers and students.

We will also need your suggestions on how we might target some of the additional federal funds toward specific projects and issues that writing project sites are facing. Remember, the work needs to be tied closely to our mission and the basic requirements of our model—the summer invitational, a continuity program, and an inservice program. What issues do you see emerging for the teachers and students in your community? What is happening at your site that might be further developed with a modest additional grant? Are issues at your site relevant to other sites in the network?

Once you have had a moment to digest all of these questions and considerations, send us your thoughts and ideas by email to nwp@writingproject.org or by regular mail. Responses are guaranteed.

Richard Sterling
Executive Director

NWP

The Voice is a publication of the National Writing Project. Support for the NWP is provided by a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Communications

Director: Roxanne Barber
Senior Editors: Amy Bauman
 Art Peterson
Associate Editor: Rebekah Truemper
Communications Specialist: My Lac
Executive Director: Richard Sterling
Co-directors: Judy Buchanan
 Elyse Eidman-Aadahl
 Mary Ann Smith
Finance Director: Michel Mathis
Associate Director: Joye Alberts
Board Chairman: Dan Boggan, Jr.

Unless bylined, articles appearing in this publication have been written by staff of *The Voice*.

National Writing Project
 2105 Bancroft Way #1042, University of California
 Berkeley, California 94720-1042
 Phone: 510/642-0963; Fax: 510/643-5717
nwp@writingproject.org www.writingproject.org

**To subscribe to NWP publications or
 to order our books,
 visit the NWP website at
www.writingproject.org/Publications/orders.html
 or call 510/642-0963.**