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nccat THE NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING

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Advancing literacy, advancing learning in North Carolina

COURTESY OF ROBERTA BIBBINS

The Forest Hills Global Elementary School's Boys Book Club increased reading scores for all members within months of its formation.

The State Board of Education recently released a plan to radically improve proficiency in student literacy across the board and to close gaps among subgroups of students. This report, "A Strategic Plan for Reading Literacy," establishes the twenty-first century vision for literacy in North Carolina as one where "all students graduate from high school with the skills necessary for personal success and lifelong learning." According to the report, a major component in achieving that vision is providing North Carolina teachers "high-quality, researched-based professional development and education programs that prepare all teachers to be teachers of reading."

During the past school year, the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching has provided hundreds of North Carolina teachers with professional development opportunities focused on improving student literacy. During these NCCAT seminars, teachers learned about best practices to increase students' reading and writing skills.

NCCAT offers a myriad of literacy-based seminars designed to enhance student learning, such as "Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature," "North Carolina is My Home: Celebrating Our State's Literary Heritage," and "The Power of Words." These instructional programs give teachers from varied disciplines the opportunity to create learning experiences that make reading and writing compelling and fun for their students.

To help teachers close achievement gaps, seminars such as "Books as Hooks: Motivating Students to Read and Write" give teachers strategies for selecting subjects and projects that motivate and engage even the most reluctant students to read and write.

Roberta Bibbins, media center coordinator at Forest Hills Global Elementary School in Wilmington, said the NCCAT seminar she attended last fall, "Teaching Reluctant Readers: Bringing Boys to Books," taught her the importance of establishing rapport with boys in order to build their skills. "You start to lose boys as readers in the fourth grade," Bibbins said. "At the NCCAT seminar, I learned how to build relationships with my boys to find out what interests them, so I can provide materials and experiences that make them want to read." When Bibbins returned to her school, she started a book club for boys (see story on page 2) and increased reading and comprehension scores for all eleven club members.

For more information about seminars focused on literacy and closing the gap, visit *www.nccat.org*.

Boys Book Club improves literacy while enhancing social skills

Roberta Bibbins, media center coordinator at Forest Hills Global Elementary School in Wilmington, was so inspired by the NCCAT seminar "Teaching Reluctant Readers: Bringing Boys to Books" that she wasted no time putting what she learned at NCCAT into action.

Bibbins attended NCCAT in October; by November, she had eleven boys in her newly established Boys Book Club. "The first time out, I met with teachers and handpicked eleven fourth-grade boys for the club," Bibbins said. "I chose some boys who were struggling readers, some strong readers, some with discipline issues, and a few who just needed a place to belong."

COURTESY OF ROBERTA BIBBINS

Membership in the Boys Book Club at Forest Hills Global Elementary became a coveted prize among the school's boys within months of the club's founding.

The club met once a week. "Most of our students don't have access to transportation after school, so my principal allowed me to hold the club during a planning period," Bibbins said. She let the boys choose the books they would read. They read them together and then discussed the books as a group.

"Through our discussions, the boys found out how much they had in common," Bibbins said. "They enjoyed the meetings and reading together. There was no pressure. No tests. They were reading for pleasure and developing community through conversation."

At the end of the semester, Bibbins had the school's reading coach test the boys' skills; each of the eleven students showed growth in reading, oral fluency, and retelling.

Just as important as the improvement in academic skills, Bibbins feels, is how the club helped the boys socially. "One of the boys with discipline issues now comes to my library once a week to help kindergartners read," Bibbins said. "He is so kind and caring with those little guys. I can only imagine how this experience will set the stage for both the kindergarten boys and my helper to become lifelong readers."

This spring, Bibbins brought together a new group of boys. "The club became so popular from word of mouth that I couldn't accommodate all the boys who were interested," Bibbins said. The success of the club has also led Bibbins to develop a workshop to show other educators in her county how to create a Boys Book Club at their schools.

To learn more about the Boys Book Club, visit Bibbin's book blog at *http://www.bibbinsblurbs.blogspot.com*.

To apply for an NCCAT seminar, call Teacher Services at 800-922-0482 or email *registrar@nccat.org*.

Susan R. Russo named director of the Development Foundation of NCCAT

ELIZABETH A. GILLESPIE

Susan R. Russo of Asheville has been named director of the Development Foundation of the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching Inc.

"Susan is passionate about our mission, and we believe she will be a great asset to the Development Foundation and to the teachers of North Carolina," said Richard A. Schwartz, president of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

Most recently, Russo was donor relations director for the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. She also has volunteered for more than a decade as a hotline attorney with Pisgah Legal Services. In 2010, she co-hosted a fundraiser for Asheville Habitat for Humanity's successful Women's Build Program.

About her new position at NCCAT, Russo said, "I am thrilled to be putting my effort and knowledge toward something as worthwhile for North Carolina as professional development for our state's educators."

Teachers travel road to civil rights

The last week in April, twenty-four North Carolina educators traveled a piece of the road that led our country to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The seminar, "Let Freedom Ride! Traveling the Road to Civil Rights in America," began at a place of education—the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Memorial Museum in Sedalia, North Carolina. In 1902, Dr. Brown founded the Palmer Memorial Institute, a nationally recognized preparatory school that educated more than one thousand African American students from 1902 to 1970.

PAT QUEEN

In a powerful moment, teachers placed their hands in the waters of the Civil Rights Memorial at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama.

From there, teachers moved on to the places, people, and events that have become synonymous with civil rights. They traveled to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, where a statue pays tribute to the Greensboro Four, who in 1960 sat down at the segregated Woolworth's lunch counter.

In Atlanta, teachers heard a personal account of the civil rights struggle from Reverend C.T. Vivian, who was part of Dr. King's executive staff. "This experience has shown me the power of using primary sources in teaching and learning," said Katie Richardson, who teaches at Pactolus Elementary School in Pitt County.

In Alabama, the group explored the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where four young girls were killed in a bombing in 1963. There, they heard from Carolyn McKinstry who was 14 years old and inside the church at the time of the bombing.

They also spent time with renowned educator Martha Bouyer to engage in a variety of hands-on activities. "Bouyer's skill in making the subject matter accessible to children made me ready to teach a civil rights unit," said Rebecca Green of Brevard Middle School in Transylvania County. "I will pass on her information to my principal so others in my district can share in the joy of having her as a teacher."

At their journey's end, they shared ideas on how to transfer what they had learned to their students. "I have taught my students mostly about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks because those are the events I knew," said Lisa Wood, who teaches at Mount Gilead Elementary School in Montgomery County. "After this experience, I will be able to teach them so much more."

To read more about this seminar, visit the wiki at *http://nccatfreedomride.pbworks.com/*.

Joyce C. Dugan joins NCCAT development board

Joyce C. Dugan of Cherokee, director of education for the Cherokee Central School System in Cherokee, has become the newest board member of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

"I have always admired and supported the goals of NCCAT and am honored to serve the organization," Dugan said. "NCCAT values the work of teachers and is committed to both honoring their worth and strengthening it."

Dugan began her career as a teacher in the Cherokee Central School System in 1974. She then became the system's federal programs director and director of education. She took time away from the school system from 1995 to 1999 to serve as Principal Chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

"We are so pleased to have Joyce Dugan on board. She brings to our efforts great leadership, professionalism, and creativity," said Richard A. Schwartz, president of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

"Wiki, Wacky, What? Understanding Web 2.0 Applications"

With the Internet turning twenty-five this year, public school students are "digital natives," meaning they have only known a connected world. However, the majority of teachers are "digital immigrants," meaning that to communicate with their students they need to learn to speak the language of the new world—the digital world.

NCCAT's seminar "Wiki, Wacky, What? Understanding Web 2.0 Applications" helped a group of teachers bridge that divide this spring by showing them how to create a learning environment that uses technology wisely.

PAT QUEEN

Teachers learned to use the latest technology to create engaging learning experiences for students. Pictured here are: Christina Efird, professional development specialist for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and Glenn Gurley, instructional technology consultant.

Presenter Glenn Gurley, an instructional technology consultant from Charlotte, opened the seminar by explaining, "Web 1.0 brought information to us through our computer screens. Today, Web 2.0 tools give us and our students the opportunity to interact with that information and even contribute to it. Through technology, students can learn with the world, not just about it."

Gurley introduced Web 2.0 terms such as blog, wiki, podcast, vodcast, interactive whiteboard, social networking, and more. Participants then worked with these tools and explored the possibilities for their own classrooms. Also, teachers received a list of freeware and open-source portable applications that can be used with Web 2.0 in the classroom.

Upon returning to her own classroom, Lydia Kirkman, who teaches math at Northwest Guilford Middle School in Guilford County, began putting what she'd learned into action.

"I worked with my media coordinator to get interactive whiteboard programs so that I could better use the eBeam technology. I have also been working on creating a glogster to use with my classes, so they can see what I learned at NCCAT," she said. "These skills are the skills my students need for the future, and it is my responsibility to equip them for this journey. I am very committed to integrating what I learned in this seminar into my daily instruction. Being able to connect with my students' passion for technology will result in higher engagement with their lessons, which will result in increased student success."

Ain't Misbehavin': Fostering safer schools through knowledge

From classroom communications to school violence, educators today can find themselves navigating legally tenuous situations before the first bell rings. To help North Carolina's public school teachers and administrators recognize legal tightropes and manage difficult situations effectively, Center Fellow Dr. Jonathan Wade designed the seminar "Ain't Misbehavin': Ethics, Law, and Conflict Resolution for Educators," which was held in cooperation with the North Carolina Bar Association (NCBA).

Through their Law Related Education Program, the NCBA gathered North Carolina attorneys to present legal issues pertinent to the classroom. Seminar participants learned about limitations on freedom of speech in regard to privacy and intellectual property. They researched cyber law and discussed the dos and don'ts of connecting the classroom to the world via the Internet. Educators also explored avenues for avoiding and ameliorating conflict.

In addition to learning the law, participants practiced conflict resolution skills. The group also learned strategies for moving from conflict to win-win outcomes.

"I was given techniques that will help me deal with challenging students in such a way as to maintain both their dignity and mine, and keep them in the classroom, which is really where I want them to be," said June Hurt, an AIG teacher at Adams Elementary School in Wake County.

Country music stars Jason Michael Carroll, Josh Thompson, and Lee Brice to perform
Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel to host benefit concert for NCCAT on August 26.
General admission tickets are available for only $9.99, plus a convenience fee (concert-goers must be 21 or older).
To purchase tickets, visit ***www.ticketmaster.com*** (search for "Harrah's Concert").

"Planet Wetlands: Living Marshlands of the Outer Banks"

This pre-kindergarten student demonstrates that it's never too early to start learning environmental science.

Teachers found themselves up to their elbows in sea and sand and proud of it at NCCAT's "Planet Wetlands: Living Marshlands of the Outer Banks" seminar in April. During the week, North Carolina teachers learned about the critically important role our fragile wetlands play in our ecosystem. They also explored their own role in restoring that fragile system with hands-on experiences at NCCAT's Ocracoke campus.

Partial funding for the seminar came through a grant secured by the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) from Restore America's Estuaries, a program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In addition, the Dominion Foundation provided funding for supplies.

Lee Leidy (far left), northeast region director with the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust and former member of the NCCAT Board of Trustees, got her feet wet along with other seminar participants as they reestablished wetlands.

"When NCCF received this grant to purchase plants to reestablish wetlands, both organizations thought it was the perfect opportunity to partner," said Laurin Baker, NCCAT's director of auxiliary services and operations.

After an explanation of the area's ecosystem and the important ecological interactions that occur between the land and water, teachers headed out to the field to conduct a shoreline profile. Sara Jean Hallas, an NCCF outreach specialist, explained that this pre-planting assessment "provided a baseline from which we can monitor the success of the restoration project." With the profile complete, the teachers planted *Spartina alterniflora*—a native wetland grass with a strong root system that helps with shoreline stabilization.

In addition to their fieldwork, the teachers took part in a host of interactive learning experiences that illustrated the workings and importance of wetlands. One activity put two seawater tanks side by side. One had oysters, one did not. After a few days, the natural filtrating ability of the oysters was obvious.

LENA DONLON (3)

Working in teams, teachers spent time learning about wetlands and then monitoring water quality parameters and measuring species diversification. The information they collected will be used by NCCF to determine the success of the newly created marsh at NCCAT's Ocracoke campus.

The teachers also engaged in a marsh metaphor exercise that used every day items to interpret the marsh's role. "For instance," Hallas said, "if I held up a child's toy, then the teachers might say it represents the fact that marshes are nature's nurseries. If I held up a coffee filter, then that reminds us that the marsh filters debris from water before it flows out to open water."

Besides the thrill of having a hand in the restoration of North Carolina's shoreline, the teachers gained the knowledge that no matter where they and their students live in the state, they can do their part to keep our wetlands clean and healthy. "Even if you live in the mountains, you can make a difference in protecting our coast by preserving vegetation to discourage runoff, and using rain barrels and cisterns when possible," Hallas said.

In addition to this professional development seminar for public school teachers, NCCAT and NCCF hosted a separate education and planting event for school students and members of the Ocracoke community. Lesson plans associated with this seminar are available at: *www.nccat.org/planetwetlands*.

Educators broaden perspective on genocide

For more than a decade, teachers who have attended NCCAT's "Teaching the Holocaust" seminars have been reuniting annually to continue their study during NCCAT's "Gathering of Holocaust Educators." This spring, more than forty alumni came to NCCAT to examine Holocaust education as part of an integrated curriculum to prevent future atrocities.

ELIZABETH A. GILLESPIE

At this year's "Gathering of Holocaust Educators," Dr. James D. Waller challenged teachers to examine the perpetrators of genocide as well as the victims.

Dr. James D. Waller, a social psychologist and affiliated scholar at Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, asked teachers to turn their focus on the perpetrators of genocide as well as the victims. Referencing his book, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing,* Waller challenged the group to look into the motivations of the people who actually performed the killing. He emphasized that is it important that we look at why people participate in genocide not to justify their actions but "to understand the conditions under which many of us could be transformed into killing machines. When we understand the ordinariness of extraordinary evil, we will be less surprised by evil, less likely to be unwitting contributors to evil, and perhaps better equipped to forestall evil," Waller said.

According to Waller, when societal conditions allow people to define a group as "other" and put them "outside the circle of moral obligation," then the groundwork for genocide has been laid.

Through several group activities, educators used Waller's research to work on solutions for everything from school bullying to policies that would inoculate entire societies against genocide. "Dr. Waller's focus on the psychology of the people who perpetrated the Holocaust allowed me to better analyze the historical events," said Pernell Collett, who teaches social studies and public speaking at Ledford High School in Thomasville.

From Waller's presentation, the seminar branched out to explore the Armenian Genocide, other victim groups during the Holocaust, and the Jewish resistance during the Holocaust. An impressive line-up of seminar faculty provided the teachers with instructional resources as well as ideas for classroom activities.

"Attending these gatherings is like attending a college-level course," Collett said. "The professional learning community provides us with extensive resources. Each year, what I learn is incorporated into what I teach and how I teach." The gatherings are designed by Dr. Jonathan Wade, director of NCCAT's Holocaust Education Program, and made possible with funding from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Inc. and the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc. For more information, visit *www.nccat.org/holocausteducation*.

NCCAT receives $65,000 for Holocaust education

Claims Conference ועידת התביעות
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

The Board of Directors of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Inc. recently awarded $65,000 to NCCAT from the Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Documentation and Education for Holocaust Education for North Carolina public school teachers.

"NCCAT is extremely grateful for the support of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and honored to continue ensuring excellence in Holocaust education in North Carolina," said Richard A. Schwartz, president of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc. He also credits the Frank and Shelly Weiner Holocaust Education Teacher Training Endowment of NCCAT for its long-term financial commitment to NCCAT's overall Holocaust Education Program.

NCCAT began offering its now acclaimed "Teaching the Holocaust" weeklong professional development programming in 1994. In 2000, the "Gathering of Holocaust Educators" annual weekend seminar for alumni was added (see story above).

CSI: From NCCAT seminar to Kings Mountain classroom

COURTESY OF MISSY SHORT (2)

Missy Short, an eighth-grade science teacher at Kings Mountain Middle School, was so impressed with how much she learned at NCCAT's "Everyone Needs a Little Mystery: CSI in Your Classroom" seminar that she thought her students deserved the same opportunity. "The activities we did were so interesting and fun that I immediately began thinking of ways to incorporate them into my own science classroom," Short said. "A lot of crime scene investigating is math and science oriented."

Her idea was to set up an actual crime scene at her school. She called on Doug Scott, an NCCAT presenter who is director of the Criminal Justice Technology program at Durham Technical Community College and a member of the Durham County Sheriff's Department, to help her with the details of the lessons.

"As crime scene investigators (CSIs), my students had to put math and science to work," Short said. "They learned to collect and analyze fingerprints, triangulate blood spatter, measure the crime scene, look for blood with the chemical Luminol, compare footprints, and much more." Short applied for and received a Bright Ideas Grant from the Rutherford Electric Corporation to pay for materials.

"Sometimes the only exposure students have to science is text books, so they do not see how science can be applied in real life. I wanted to change that for the students I teach—and I did," Short said. All four of the eighth-grade science classes at Kings Mountain Middle School participated in Short's CSI activity this spring. The school plans to repeat the lesson for next year's eighth-grade students as well.

Eighth-grade science students conducted experiments in their self-made CSI lab. With ideas gleaned from an NCCAT seminar, Missy Short created a hands-on learning opportunity for all eighth graders at Kings Mountain Middle School.

Marjorie T. and John S. Britt Honored Educator Scholarship fully endowed

LENA DONLON

Marjorie Britt with David Holt

The Marjorie T. and John S. Britt Honored Educator Scholarship has reached full endowment and will begin providing support for a North Carolina public school teacher to attend a professional development seminar at NCCAT every year.

This worthy achievement was formally recognized during the NCCAT alumni seminar held at Atlantic Beach this winter. There, Marjorie Britt, retired teacher and NCCAT alumna, was presented with an engraved vase to commemorate the ongoing gift made possible for North Carolina teachers by Marjorie and her husband, John.

Marjorie Britt received a special acknowledgement from David Holt, a Grammy-award winning musician and one of Britt's favorite performers. Holt, well known for his love and knowledge of traditional American music, was the primary presenter at NCCAT's "Musical Traditions of North Carolina" alumni weekend seminar.

The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching
276 NCCAT Drive
PO Box 5121
Cullowhee, NC 28723

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Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. to be honored at the *25th Anniversary NCCAT Golden Apple Gala*

This fall, NCCAT will celebrate twenty-five years of service to public education and the teachers of North Carolina. The *25th Anniversary NCCAT Golden Apple Gala* also will honor one of our state's preeminent leaders, former Governor James B. Hunt Jr., under whose administration NCCAT was formed. This event will take place at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville on October 30.

"Governor Hunt's visionary understanding of the need for high-quality public education and passionate educators has put North Carolina on the map as a leader in education reform," said Dr. Mary McDuffie, executive director of NCCAT.

Hunt served as governor of North Carolina from 1977 to 1985 and 1993 to 2001. During his administrations, many innovative educational initiatives came into being, including Smart Start, the Public School Forum, and NCCAT.

MARK HASKETT

Former Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. at NCCAT's 20th anniversary

Governor Hunt currently chairs the Board of Directors of two institutes which he founded, The James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy and the Institute for Emerging Issues. He also serves on the North Carolina Advisory Board of DonorsChoose. An authorized biography of Hunt is scheduled to be released in the fall of 2010.

"As the son of a teacher and the husband of a teacher, Governor Hunt brings a personal understanding of the importance of cultivating and nurturing the best in our public school teachers," said Linda Suggs, chair of NCCAT's Board of Trustees. "He worked tirelessly to see the dream of NCCAT become a reality and to produce passionate educators who are able to lead our children into the twenty-first century. For NCCAT and for all he has done for public education in our state and the nation, we feel it is more than fitting to honor Governor Hunt at the *25th Anniversary NCCAT Golden Apple Gala*."

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Dr. Mary D. McDuffie, Executive Director
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