

What Can the Teacher Center Do For You?

Each and every one of the teachers in our eleven districts is a member of Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center (SETC). As a member, you are entitled to a broad array of services offered by the Teacher Center. We want to make sure you know just what is available for you, so read ahead and when you finish, save this issue for reference.

SETC is part of a large statewide network of centers established in 1984 to provide a way for teachers to take charge of their own professional growth and to share with one another the wealth of expertise they possess. It is the only state-funded program guaranteed to support teacher professional development exclusively. Since the professional development goals, direction, and program offerings are determined by the Policy Board (consisting of a majority of teachers), this means that member teachers are in the driver's seat. Let's take a closer look at what the Teacher Center does for you.

Professional Growth. First and foremost, we support your professional growth. There are over 90 courses and workshops on our professional development catalogue menu. In addition, SETC offers graduate programs in Educational Computing and School District Leadership through Stony Brook University and Literacy Education through Dowling College.

The Teacher Center supports new teachers with training in classroom management and a

mentor training program that will help to ensure their teaching success. It supports all teachers with training and incentives to form professional learning communities to reflect upon their teaching practice together. Whether doing action research, forming collegial circles, or examining student work collaboratively in the peer review process, like-minded teachers can call upon the Teacher Center for initial help and ongoing support.

Coaching. The Teacher Center offers coaching in a broad spectrum of subjects including literacy. Find out more by going to www.seteachercenter.org and clicking on the Professional Development link. We also provide support for acquisition of National Board certification.

Grants. In addition, SETC offers incentives for professional growth with several grant programs:

- The *Mini-Grant Program* provides groups up to \$1800 and individuals up to \$1200 in awards to develop unique projects. Mini-grants may be used to research programs for district or school use, to create unique classroom projects, to develop innovative curriculum resource materials, to initiate projects that a district will continue to fund in the future, or to focus on professional development programs.
- *Professional Learning Community (PLC) Grants* support teachers who are interested in learning to-

gether using one or more of the five professional development models explained on the Teacher Center website at www.seteachercenter.org.

Workroom. Did you know that there's a workroom at the Teacher Center with laminators, a poster printing machine, bookbinders, a button and magnet maker and Ellison press cutters available for you to create your classroom instructional materials? There is always someone available to help you operate the machinery. Call for an appointment to ensure a staff member is available.

Lending Services. The Teacher Center also has a lending library for you to peruse and/or borrow educational literature and videotapes as well as overviews of over 100 past mini-grants. Our technology lending program includes IBM laptop computers, a digital video camera, and a Proxima available for loan.

Newsletters. Finally, we distribute this monthly newsletter, with articles on issues of educational importance and current concern. An e-newsletter is also sent to subscriber mailboxes monthly. It keeps teachers current on educational training, events, and resources, including helpful websites. To subscribe to our monthly e-mail letter, please put in your request by e-mailing to us at teacher_center@wsboces.org.

Don't forget to visit our website at www.seteachercenter.org to find out more. Please be sure to call the Teacher Center at 631-254-0107 with any questions, ideas, or news from your district.

Peer Review: Looking at Student Work Together

“Looking at student work is a way to move out of complacency. Looking at student work brings you face to face with your values.”

Daniel Baron,
Director of Outreach
Services, Harmony
School of Education

**Contact Suffolk’s
Edge Teacher Center
for information about
creating a peer review
inservice course in
your district!**

In this issue, we continue our examination of professional learning community (PLC) models. In our February and March issues, we took a close look at collegial circles and peer coaching. In this issue we’ll investigate peer review.

What is Peer Review? It is a collaborative examination of teacher and/or student work in a safe, non-threatening environment with the goal of offering collegial insight to optimize student learning. It has had a long and successful history in medicine and industry. It’s easy to see why when you begin to practice peer review and experience its value firsthand.

What are the benefits? Collaboration and reflection are essential to educational improvement. When teachers join together to examine and evaluate their own and their students’ work, the results are empowering. Peer review is an excellent lens through which teachers can investigate the quality of work.

What are the considerations? A collegial atmosphere is necessary. Reviewers need sensitivity and expertise. The teacher presenter must maintain an open mind. Peer review needs the support of building and central office administration. Time must be set aside to conduct reviews of teacher and student work.

What are the results? Teachers who present work typically find:

- they can diagnose, identify or monitor student needs,
- they confirm their own impressions and gain new insights into the thinking of their students, and thus improve their teaching.

Teachers participating as peer reviewers:

- develop a sense of the kind and quality of work going on inside their school,
- gain new ideas for their classrooms,

- begin to develop a shared understanding of how educational standards are addressed and attained.

How is peer review structured? To conduct peer review, a protocol is always used. A protocol is a prescribed interactive process for inquiry. Its use provides a safe setting for reflective dialogue about the work and helps to keep efforts focused on the specific learning needs of students. There are many different protocols. A decision on which one to use is based on what your goal is and how much preparation time you can take. Here are several of the most popular protocols. The *Tuning Protocol* uses teacher lesson plans and standards-based examination of student work. The *Descriptive Review of a Child* uses only student work and is a positive model focusing on what a student can do. The purpose of the *Collaborative Assessment Conference* is to learn more about the strengths and needs of students and to reflect on and gather ideas for revising classroom practice. The *Charrette*’s purpose is to improve a piece of work before it is ever placed in a high stakes environment.

What roles do participants have? The Peer Review process works best with 6-9 reviewers who agree to take on roles. Ideally, it takes no more than one hour. The *presenter* presents information clearly and concisely, shares analysis, is explicit about the feedback desired, listens to the feedback and makes decisions based on that feedback and his/her own analysis. The *facilitator* keeps time, explains roles and purposes and monitors the meeting. The *recorder* takes notes and synthesizes information to capture the total picture. The *peer reviewers* are active listeners who seek to understand, ask clarifying questions when time is allotted and give “warm” and “cool” feedback. The format is highly structured and designed to achieve a reasonable balance of teacher presentation, attention to the student work, feedback, teacher response and synthesizing discussion.

Want to learn more? Go to www.lasw.org. Be sure to contact the Teacher Center with any questions or if you would like to start looking at student work together in your school or district.

Workroom News: New Ellison Dies have Arrived!

Those who frequent our workroom regularly know what a valuable tool the Ellison die cutter is. The die cutter helps teachers to create enchanting and lively materials for their students and for classroom displays. The collection of

Ellison dies in our workroom is already substantial. Now we’ve added more! Here are new shapes that have just arrived.

Name plate w/star, Iris, Rose, Game pieces, Bingo Card, Puzzle Set (XL), Card with

decorative border, Envelope, Border-Icicles.

Math Dies: *Fraction strip, Math signs (+ - x , =), 3-D Cylinder (XL), 3-D Pentagon, 3-D Pyramid, 3-D Hexagon*

Come visit us and experience what our creative, die-hard die cutters already know!

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