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# THE BEACON

Newsletter of the Western New York Educational Service Council

January 2011

## WNY DELEGATION VISITS CHINA Trip may result in Chinese teachers coming here

Fourteen educators representing nine schools in Western New York recently returned from a nine-day educational trip to China. Sponsored by the Confucius Institute, and led by its local associate director, Peggy Du, the group split time between Beijing and Kunming. The latter is located in the southern province of Yunnan, home to 45 million people (with 46 different minorities). They visited 4 schools, grades 1-12, where all students study the core subjects, including Mandarin (the official language) and English every day.



Their school days are long and rigorous, Monday through Friday (8am-4pm), with most children doing homework well into the evening, and then extra study or tutoring on Saturday. The higher education schools are incredibly competitive, with only 4-5% of the students gaining entry. The classes are highly structured and teacher-directed at all levels, with choral reading and responding the most common form of learning activity. Educational leaders do realize their system does

not encourage creativity, but the testing results are positive. The typical classroom has 60 students and is very simple and spartan, except for the wide-screen televisions. There is no heating or air-conditioning, so everyone bundles up at this time of year. Even in a tropical zone, the temps can dip into the 40s at night. (continued on page 2)



The Western New York Educational Service Council is proud of its partnership with the law firm of Hodgson Russ LLP Attorneys. We appreciate their support as our Corporate Sponsor and recognize their outstanding service to the schools of Western New York.

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There have been many changes in China since the Cultural Revolution in the 1970's. Education is now considered a "human right" and compulsory through grades 9. There has been a dramatic increase in attendance, with goals of accessibility, equity, more creativity and professional development, and more public financing. However, they still face many challenges and are as interested in learning from us as we are from them.



**On the left** are students in daily outdoor exercise class, with music written and movement choreographed by their teachers. Dressed in minority group costumes this day, less than 1/3 of the school's 3000 students are shown.

**A typical 3rd grade classroom** to the right. The colorful chart in the back recognizes each student's good behavior and positive character traits. Every class has a wide - screen television.



The Delegation also visited many historical and cultural centers, including the Great Wall, The Forbidden City and the Lama Temple in Beijing and the Stone Forest and Jiuxiang Cave in Kunming. Most importantly, they learned about many possibilities for student, teacher and cultural interactions and exchanges. It is likely that several teachers of Chinese language (Mandarin) and culture will be coming to Western New York next school year. **Anyone interested in learning more about this program and/or next trip to China should contact Bren Price at 716-645-2932. More photos at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wnychinabridge2010/>**

## **Time to Nominate for the 6th Annual Awards Banquet**

How often do we recognize excellence in our schools? Not enough. That's why the Council initiated this program 6 years ago. The winners are recognized for excellence over time in their field of work. With daily public criticism of the professionals who work so hard on behalf of children and communities, this event is a wonderful opportunity to honor the best of the best. Typically, 250-350 people attend each year.

Nomination forms for outstanding service as support staff, teachers or school administrators were mailed to superintendents of all affiliate districts in early December. Superintendent nominations were sent to School Board Presidents. This year's event will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Amherst on Thursday, March 10, 2011 from 5:30 pm - 9:00 pm. It is a fun-filled, exciting night, so think carefully about who to nominate.

Forms are due in the Council office January 21, 2011. Don't wait until the last minute.

## New Advanced Certificate in Educational Technology and New Literacies Program at UB

With the quickly advancing technologies and the changing needs of today's students, the Graduate School of Education has launched a new program offering an Advanced Certificate in Educational Technologies and New Literacies. The theoretical approach toward *new literacies* refers to a set of technologies and social practices enabling the mental, the oral, and the gestural to be *represented* and *read* in new forms of texts. This program combines the knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> Century tools with research-based approaches to teaching and learning literacies to offer a NY State credential certifying a contemporary approach to learning and learning theory.

Since the Graduate School of Education is home to more than a dozen scholars noted for their technological innovation, this program will be taught only by the experts. The Advanced Certificate in Educational Technology and New Literacies gives students the opportunity to learn about state-of-the-art tools and pedagogy that lead the field of education. Some students may even have the opportunity to work side-by-side with professors developing new tools and implementing them in school settings.

This program is directed towards teachers who would like to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment in their classroom or educational administrators looking to support exemplary models of technology implementation.

This Certificate will prepare students for careers in teaching, administration, counseling, or research and can be obtained separately or in conjunction with a concurrent degree program. UB is taking applications for immediate enrollment. Please contact [cadimino@buffalo.edu](mailto:cadimino@buffalo.edu) or [rverrick@buffalo.edu](mailto:rverrick@buffalo.edu) if interested.

### Two More NEW On-Line Offerings at UB

A new online non-matriculated course is being offered by the Graduate School of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy: **ELP 689 – School Law and Policy Issues in Human Resources and Finance, taught by Dr. Thomas Ramming.** This course is designed to help current and aspiring school leaders better understand law and policy issues in the areas of human resources and school finance. How policies and laws are developed, including the roles of the executive, legislative or judicial branches of federal and state government, will be explored. The role that interest groups play in affecting law and policy will be discussed. Finally, the administration of policies and laws at the local level, with implications for school leaders, will be addressed.

GSE also offers fully online programs including an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Gifted Education (all required course work for teachers to receive their gifted education extensions) and Master's degrees in Library Science, Rehabilitation Counseling, and Science and the Public. Information is available online at [www.gse.buffalo.edu/online](http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/online) or by contacting the Admissions office, 645-2110.

### SAVE OR PASS ALONG THESE DATES

March 10, 2011	<b>6th Annual Awards Banquet</b> <b>Marriott Hotel</b> 5:30 pm - 9:00 pm All Nomination Forms found at <a href="http://www.wnyesc.org/awards.html">www.wnyesc.org/awards.html</a>
March 16, 2011	<b>Safe Schools Seminar</b> UB Center for Arts 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
April 1, 2011	<b>Legal Issues for School Building Administrators</b> Millennium Hotel 7:45 am - 12:30 pm Information, Registration found at <a href="http://www.wnyesc.professionaldev.html">www.wnyesc.professionaldev.html</a>

**Thanks to the UB Graduate School of Education**

**The WNYESC recognizes its invaluable partnership with the Graduate School of Education at SUNY Buffalo. The Council deeply appreciates support from Dr. Mary Gresham, Dean of the Graduate School of Education. We also thank the Faculty and Staff for their encouragement and participation in the Council programs and activities.**

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**UPCOMING CALENDAR**

<b>January</b>	13th Executive Leadership Series	8:00 - 9:30 am	Millennium
	21st Award Banquet Nominations close		
	19th School Administrator Series	7:45 - 10:00 am	Millennium
<b>February</b>	10th Executive Leadership Series	4:00 - 6:30 pm	Millennium
	21st-25th Mid-Winter Break Erie BOCES		
<b>March</b>	9th School Administrator Series	7:45 - 10:00 am	Millennium
	9th Board Meeting	11:30 am	Eagle House
	10th Awards for Excellence Banquet	5:30 - 9:00 pm	Marriott
	16th Safe Schools Seminar- UB	9:00 - 3:00 pm	Center for Arts
<b>April</b>	1st Legal Issues for School Administrators	7:45 - 10:00 am	Millennium
	18th-22nd Spring Break Erie BOCES		
	21st Executive Leadership Series	8:00 - 10:00 am	Millennium
<b>May</b>	19th E-NSSA's SARD Dinner	5:30 - 9:00 pm	Marriott

**WNYESC STAFF**

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