



AAPAE NEWSLETTER No 13
16th JANUARY 2010

AAPAE's 9th ANNUAL GATHERING AND CONFERENCE

will be hosted by

HURSTBRIDGE LEARNING CO-OP

From

SATURDAY 3rd - MONDAY 5th JULY 2010

Hurstbridge Learning Co-operative
Laceys Road
Hurstbridge, VIC 3099
Phone:03-97181481

www.hurstbridgelearningcoop.vic.edu.au/index.html

We are holding the conference over the weekend for the first time, to enable our colleagues in Tasmania to join us for some, if not all, of the gathering. We hope to have more information about the conference in Term 1 of 2010.

Keep an eye on AAPAE's website for further details

www.aapae.edu.au

Previous AAPAE conferences were

2001 - CURRAMBENA, SYDNEY, NSW

2002 - MARBURY, ADELAIDE, SA

2003 - PINE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, BRISBANE, QLD

2004 - FITZROY COMMUNITY SCHOOL, MELBOURNE, VIC

2005 - PRESHIL, MELBOURNE, VIC

2006 - IDEC, SYDNEY, NSW

2007 - KINMA, SYDNEY, NSW

2009 - TAMARIKI, CHRISTCHURCH, NZ

NATIONAL NEWS

In November 2009, AAPAE had a response from The Federal Minister Julia Gillard's Chief of Staff, Amanda Lampe about our concerns re NAPLAN, Funding requirements, National Curriculum and related matters. The letter is a detailed summary of the requirements under the Schools Assistance Act 2008, the legislation for Commonwealth funding for non-government schools for the 2009-2012 quadrennium.

Five obligations are detailed

national testing

performance information for national reports

provide "individual school information to enable nationally comparable information about each school to be made publicly available"

plain language student reports to parents

publish a school annual report for parents and community

Many members of AAPAE were relieved that in the letter the Government continued to recognize the right of individual parents to make the decision whether their child will participate in comparative reporting and "assessment conditions which they feel are inappropriate for their child"

The view regarding the National Curriculum is expressed as

"The national curriculum will not mandate the pedagogical practices that schools or teachers use to deliver its content and achievement standards. It will not limit the ability of teachers to use different instructional methods in recognition of the fact that children learn in different ways at different rates. Schools and teachers will continue to apply their professional judgement regarding what to cover, in what sequence and how best to cater to the individual learning needs and styles. Schools are also able to offer programs and subjects outside the national curriculum to complement areas not covered by the national curriculum "

If any members would like a copy of the letter for their school records please contact Cecelia.

MYSCHOOL

The start of 2010 has been dominated by the pre and post reactions to the launch of the Federal Government's new accountability and transparency tool, the MYSCHOOL website. Some members of AAPAE have written to support the campaign of the Australian Education Union to boycott the NAPLAN test process if the government does not prevent the possibility of formation and publication of leagues tables from the data on its site and also to consider widening the campaign to challenge the testing process itself. We also intend to spend time at our conference in July discussing the diversity of views in AAPAE re highstakes testing and the publication of results etc on the Myschools website and the effects that this will have on our schools.

NEWS from ACARA

On Monday 1 March 2010, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) will publish the draft K-10 Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History for a period of national consultation.

The consultation period closes on 23 May 2010.

The draft curriculum and all the resources required to provide feedback are published at: www.australiancurriculum.edu.au.

At this address, you will find the draft curriculum about which you can comment, a survey which you can complete and other resources such as videos, information sheets and frequently asked questions.

On visiting the website, you will need to register your details in a process that will provide you with an ongoing login and password and ensures you the opportunity to save and return to your feedback over time and as often as you wish.

This is an opportunity for you to express your views and comment on the draft curriculum materials.

The draft curriculum in the same four learning areas, for the senior secondary years, will be published online and available for public consultation between April and June 2010. More details on consultation on the senior years' curriculum will be provided in March. ACARA will refine the draft curriculum in response to the feedback from both the K-10 and senior years' national consultation, and will publish a final version of the K-12 Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History in September 2010.

If you want to know more about ACARA, you could visit the ACARA website at www.acara.edu.au.

AAPAE will continue participating in the feedback process so if you wish to contribute to this please send your thoughts to Cecelia.

To view AAPAE's Submissions re the National Curriculum please visit our website www.aapae.edu.au

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

IDEC 2010 will be held in **Israel from 6th – 13th April 2010.**

It will be run by the **Institute of Democratic Education in Tel Aviv.**

The website for the conference is <http://www.2010.e-idec.org>

David Gribble wrote this report recently for International Democratic Education Network (IDEN)

IDEC2010 conference will have three parts:

1. Tuesday 6th April to Thursday 8 April – a conference including lectures by leading educators from around the world, an exhibition of unique schools and various tours.
2. Friday 9 April to Saturday 10 April – open space weekend – dedicated to the community of democratic schools.
3. Sunday 11 April through Tuesday 13 April – educational field trips in Israel. The three-day Jerusalem tour will include a meeting with spokesmen from both sides of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict, and a visit to Hope Flowers School in Bethlehem.

Fees for the conference are graduated from Jan 15th – March 1st 2010

REGISTRATION at <http://www.2010.e-idec.org/registration>.

The person to contact with any queries is Ayala Luyckx, ayalal@democratic.co.il

Breaking NEWS re IDEC2010

Dear IDEC Community,

It is very exciting and a great pleasure to invite you to join us at Hope Flowers School in Bethlehem for the first part of IDEC 2010 which will take place April 3-4-5, 2010. The Bethlehem portion of the conference, at Hope Flowers School, will be the first three days and will be followed by the Tel Aviv portion starting on April 6.

Your presence will be very important. The schedule will include educational workshops, activities organized by students and adults, social evenings, and field trips. You will learn about how democratic education is being pioneered on the West Bank and we look forward to learning from you.

The charge for the Hope Flowers portion is US\$ 360.00. This includes:

Accommodation at Hope Flowers School Guest House or an overflow facility;

3 meals per day;

field trips including transportation.

Please arrive on April 2nd or on April 3rd before 1:00pm.*

By Thursday Feb 4th we will have a link on the Hope Flowers School website, which will give fuller information about the conference. We kindly ask you to confirm your participation by return email as soon as possible, which will help us shape and organize our schedule. You will be most welcome at Hope Flowers School.

www.hopeflowersschool.org

Contact person for IDEC 2010 in Bethlehem: Ghada Issa Ghabboun

Email: ghada712@yahoo.com

IDEC 2009

The official Korean IDEC was cancelled by the organisers because of swine flu, but a smaller conference went ahead in spite of the risk. 70 – 80 people took part, of whom 21 came from outside Korea – three from Canada, two from Germany, four from Israel, four from Japan, three from Taiwan. and five from the USA. This is an abbreviated version of Moe Zimmerberg's report.

The historians can debate for millenniums (at great institutional expense) about whether or not this was an official IDEC, but for me it was. It was the 2009 gathering of democratic educators, students, parents and NGOs and it was in Korea, and it was great. The first 4 days were spent at the Gil School. We were well taken care of: Picked up at the airport, walked around the neighborhood to orient ourselves and fed free lunches at the local Buddhist Temple. We were also taken to some local markets in downtown Seoul, Dongdemun and Namdemun.

We visited four alternative schools in the Seoul area. The Mindule School started as a

drop-in center for drop-outs (school refusers) and continues to be a resource for homeschoolers. The Haja Center has focused on media and the performing arts. We were treated to a performance of Brazilian music which so impressed me that I had to cut out during the Q and A to grab the musicians for a jam session. Music is a form of communication that needs no translation and builds wonderful bonds of connection across cultures. The next day we visited two more schools before splitting up for dinner and shopping and returning to the Gil School to clean up.

We spent the next three days at the IDEC camp at the Jeonin School in Chuncheon City. Jeonin School is a boarding school; they hosted the international participants and the organizers, as well as students and teachers and parents from the Korean alternative school networks. I think around 100 of us were fed and housed.

We had a chance to make presentations about our schools, including our ex-student Maya Mascarenas' workshop on teacher evaluation. All the teachers had to leave the room while Maya helped the Korean students through an evaluation of some of them – a first time for most of them! We also had a workshop on traditional Korean percussion. The San Children's School taught us how to play the instruments. This workshop was so popular that we split into 2 groups and performed for each other after learning a few songs.

We made IDEC history by adding international video conferencing to two of the sessions. It took us a while to work out all the technical bugs but it was great, especially during the IDEC meeting, to have the comments from Cecelia Bradley from Australia, Yaacov Hecht from Israel and David Gribble from the UK.

The students who organized for the 2009 conference really felt like the "rug was pulled out from under them" by the cancellation and wanted to have the chance to do a full-on IDEC in 2011. Unfortunately they didn't have enough support from other Korean organizations that night to commit. The decision, based on written or video application, will be made by former IDEC organizers, after fully experiencing the IDEC 2009 youth group's feelings. If a decision cannot be made by then, it will go to the 2010 IDEC in Israel in April.

The IDEC 2009 was organized mostly by teenagers. There was a suggestion to establish a global youth collaboration for preparing future IDECs from the perspective of young people. This seems to mean that the Korean teenagers who organized this IDEC are keen to connect with Israeli teenagers who might be interested in making sure that the adults don't completely control IDEC 2010 and disregard the kids.

After spending all this time together, the international travellers were enjoying each other so much that when the Gandhi school offered to host us for a few days we jumped at the offer. The most fascinating thing was the visit to the ancient city of Andung. Some of the students of the Gandhi School had a grandmother who actually lived in a house in this cultural museum and was a descendant of the Prime Minister of Korea some 500 years ago (that's one step down from the king). They've hosted the Queen of England, Bushes one and two and now, the foreign participants of IDEC. The following morning we participated in a ceremony for a new building at the Gandhi School, complete with offerings and rice wine thrown to the 4 directions and a feast at the end.

I'm going to call this the end of the IDEC 2009. From here we split up and regrouped into smaller units and mostly toured around Korea. Lets call it 10 days of workshops,

presentations, meetings, school visits, and cultural field trips. Sounds like an IDEC to me.

Mike Weimann has posted a collection of photographs at <http://miwe.org/bilder/ideckorea/> and added the following commentary.

The first part of the picture gallery illustrates Moe's report; later on you see photos from our trip to Busan, the second largest city of South Korea, where we were invited by the Odada School. They showed us movies about their school trips, Reshef from Israel showed a documentary about his Givat Olga School, and we talked a bit about our school in Berlin. Some of us stayed as guests in Korean homes.

Meta and I visited another, very small school in the countryside near Bonghwa. They include meditation in their daily activities. Currently they only have five students and these students haven't been at the school but on a long-term field trip on Jeju Island, Korea's largest island, south of the peninsula. We were very happy to get an invitation to visit these students at their rural domicile. We talked a lot with the school founder, Kom Sang-bok, a former trade union leader, about the freedom and self-guidance of the students and their engagement with the arts. We learned a lot about the Korean school system and also about the nation's history.

We visited a smaller democratic school in the Jirisan mountains, where we made trip around a newly prepared hiking/walking trail which had been established by a Korean man, Mr. Hang, who had studied and worked for ten years in Germany. So he started to speak German! And explained that he had copied the idea for this trail from the German mountains, where trails like this are very common. And, surprisingly, his son was attending this small school Silsangsa - and he had taught there. A great coincidence! Back in Seoul students from Haja school offered a guided tour through neighbourhoods which we (and tourists in general) would never have seen otherwise. These guided tours are a typical part of the school experience at Haja school; students develop very different skills by being with guests, explaining their town.

Finally Silbi took us (among other things) to typical state schools, which made the visit perfect. Not to be forgotten was a guided tour to the border to North Korea, where I personally stood on the territory, but only for three minutes and only two metres beyond the border, inside the famous building at Panmunjon.

The IDEC with all the above-mentioned events after the main programme was wonderful. The hospitality, and the engagement of so many, mainly young, people gave such a good atmosphere. From the video they had produced in advance to promote the IDEC in Korea you can see, how intensively they had worked. I've copied it into the internet, just to let you take part and to acknowledge the Korean IDEC hosts with applause:

<http://miwe.org/video/ideckorea/>

The cancellation because of the flu was really a disaster for them. But we, the foreigners, could understand that they couldn't risk the damage to the still tender plant of the democratic schools movement in Korea. If there had been negative press coverage caused by a guest of such a school catching the disease, they would have to overcome many more difficulties than they have already. (By the way: we felt safer there, because

at that time the number of swine-flu cases in Germany was increasing steeply.)

Mike Weimann

Please consider becoming a member of AAPAE.
For details visit our website www.aapae.edu.au or contact us

AAPAE CONTACTS

Secretary
Sue Goode
c/- Currumbena
205 Longueville Rd
Lane Cove NSW 2066
02 94270644
secretary@aapae.edu.au

President
Cecelia Bradley
8 Galali Pl
Aranda
ACT 2614
02 62513136
president@aapae.edu.au