

To: Schlechty Center Clients

From: George Thompson, President

Re: Information on 2009–10 Working on the Work Conferences

Date: August 21, 2009

This year will mark the **10<sup>th</sup> year** of Working on the Work Conferences!

The Schlechty Center launched its first Working on the Work Conference in Indianapolis in 1999, three years before Phil Schlechty's *Working on the Work: An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents* was published. At that time we were not sure if anyone would attend the conference. However, 96 participants did sign on for that first conference, and since then more than 12,000 participants have attended Working on the Work Conferences across the country. Every year the conference is a new design and we welcome conference attendees from past years.

This year's conference focus is "Designing the Future." The guiding question of the conference will be, "How do we develop the capacity to design the future?" Participants will analyze their current organizational structure (classroom, school, or district) and determine their current capacity to design the future. The Schlechty Center has addressed the issue of school district capacity in its work over the past 20 years. More recently, in working with teachers and principals, the Center has come to view the usefulness of applying the concept of capacity to the potentials and limitations of the schoolhouse. Most recently, the Center is encouraging teachers to think of their classrooms as social systems which they develop and lead in order to nurture continuous innovation on behalf of student engagement.

During the conference, participants will explore other key concepts such as engagement, design, and transformation. The role of teacher will be redefined as leader, designer, and guide to instruction, based on Phil Schlechty's newest thinking. All participants will have the opportunity to learn through three keynote conversations with Phil Schlechty and George Thompson. Attendees will have a choice of three concurrent sessions to deepen their learning. During the concurrent sessions, participants will have additional opportunities to interact with Phil Schlechty.

The conference fee is a half-unit or \$800 per attendee for Standard-Bearer School District Network members. Non-Network districts may send participants at a cost of \$900 each. The fee includes conference meals and materials. As an added bonus, we are inviting superintendents of active Network districts to personally attend this conference at no unit cost. (No substitutions, please.)

### **Concurrent Sessions**

**Engagement 2.0:** This session will focus on foundational concepts such as beliefs, engagement, student voice, Design Qualities, and design. The session will touch on the design process as well. This session is designed for those who have had little experience with the Working on the Work

framework. Participants will learn how the foundational concepts assist in developing capacity to design the future and become engagement-centered.

**Design 2.0:** This session will move the foundational concepts from theory into practice. All participants will experience the Schlechty Center's design process and be coached through a learning experience for students or adults. Those attending will share in a number of design challenges to deepen their understanding of capacity and design.

**School Transformation 2.0:** This session is designed for attendees to join three to four other conference participants from districts across the country in a simulation of a school self-study. Unlike many typical self-studies, here the teams will assess a school's *capacity*, not its present performance, and will gather evidence from artifacts and interviews to draw conclusions about the potential of this school to support school transformation. The simulation experience will provide participants with valuable new skills and understandings which they can apply in their own schools as they return home to continue the work of focusing on engagement.

### **Conference Locations and Hotel Information**

**Date:**           **October 4–7, 2009**  
**Location:**     Hilton Dallas/Southlake Town Square Hotel  
                    1400 Plaza Place  
                    Dallas, Texas 76092  
**Rates:**         \$149/single or double

**Date:**           **October 18–21, 2009**  
**Location:**     Marriott Atlanta Marquis Hotel  
                    265 Peachtree Center Avenue  
                    Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
**Rates:**         \$135/single or double

**Date:**           **November 1–4, 2009**  
**Location:**     Hilton Columbus/Polaris Hotel  
                    8700 Lyra Drive  
                    Columbus, Ohio 43240  
**Rates:**         \$105/single or double

**Date:**           **January 24–27, 2010**  
**Location:**     Hilton Dallas/Southlake Town Square Hotel  
                    1400 Plaza Place  
                    Dallas, Texas 76092  
**Rates:**         \$149/single or double

**Date:**           **March 7–10, 2010**  
**Location:**     Renaissance Tampa Hotel International Plaza  
                    4200 Jim Walter Blvd.  
                    Tampa, Florida 33607  
**Rates:**         \$139/single or double

### **Conference Times**

We will begin all Working on the Work Conferences on Sunday evenings at 5 p.m., with registration beginning at 4 p.m. On Monday and Tuesday mornings, we will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude by 4 p.m. We will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude by noon on Wednesdays.

Please register by going to our website ([www.schlechycenter.org](http://www.schlechycenter.org)) and clicking on “Conferences.” Then click on “Working on the Work Conference.” Hotel information is available on the website.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sandy Jenkins, Senior Associate, by e-mail at [sjenkins@schlechycenter.org](mailto:sjenkins@schlechycenter.org) or by phone at 937.604.6671. You may also contact Tena Lutz, Conference Coordinator, at [tlutz@schlechycenter.org](mailto:tlutz@schlechycenter.org). Tena’s phone number is 502.895.1942.