



BRIAN BETTIS (3)

NCCAT alumna Jessica Hamalainen, a kindergarten teacher at Springmore Elementary School, working at the SMART Board with her students.

NC teachers make SMART Boards smarter at NCCAT

Technology can make even the most tedious lessons come alive for students and thus enhance learning. The hitch, teachers have to know how to use the technology with the curriculum.

When Springmore Elementary School in Cleveland County got SMART Boards for every classroom, Brian Bettis, the school's curriculum technology coordinator, had one thought: NCCAT's Teacher Scholars in Residence seminar. "When I attended an NCCAT seminar in 2009, they told us about the Teacher Scholars in Residence seminars. I knew that was what we needed to make the most of our SMART Boards for our students," said Bettis, a National Board Certified Teacher who taught third grade and kindergarten before taking his current position. Teacher Scholars in Residence seminars provide teachers a block of time at NCCAT to work on special projects.

Developed by SMART Technologies, SMART Boards are interactive white boards that allow teachers and students to manipulate presentations with the touch of a finger. Three teachers from Springmore Elementary School joined Bettis's team, Jill Hamrick, Jennifer Schweitzer, and Jessica Hamalainen, plus one teacher from Union Elementary School in Sampson County, Jenny Edwards. All four enthusiastically agreed to become part of the project. Together they wrote a proposal to design lessons that integrate SMART Board technology with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for K-5 math and English language arts.

With their proposal accepted, the team headed to NCCAT for five days as Teacher Scholars in Residence in the spring of 2011. SMART Technologies had recently partnered with NCCAT to provide a SMART Board interactive whiteboard and SMART Table, plus training for NCCAT faculty and staff. "At school, my contact with teachers is curriculum planning and sharing resources," Bettis said. "At NCCAT, the teachers and I had time to brainstorm and think strategically together to create those resources and make them even more relevant to student needs."

At NCCAT, the team developed thirty-four plans for English language arts; forty-one for math; and twenty-eight for different thematic units in kindergarten. "We walked away from our NCCAT experience with something we could put to use in the classroom immediately," Bettis said.

Anticipating the new Common Core State Standards, the team designed their SMART Board lessons to follow those standards. "Because it's Common Core, what we developed can be used district-wide, statewide and by teachers in the other states that use Common Core," Bettis said. "We actually named the lessons to align with the standards."

Currently, the district is in the process of posting the team's SMART Board lessons to <http://mail.clevelandcountyschools.org/~ccselem>, making them available to anyone who visits the site.

Letter from the Executive Director



It is difficult to believe that I am within sight of completing my first year as executive director of the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT). My start date was April 1, 2011; given the events of the past year, I have found myself on the receiving end of a bit of teasing regarding that specific date—April Fool’s

Day. For me it is an amusing irony but no more than that because, regardless of the challenges, I have been given the opportunity to lead one of the most interesting organizations in American education. NCCAT is an organization that has an impressive history and, I am convinced, the potential for an even more important future.

In setting our course to the future, it is critical that we form a strong foundation in the present; this has been our number one priority over the past months. With a 50 percent reduction to the appropriation that NCCAT receives from the state of North Carolina, it was necessary to make some significant budgetary decisions. We were guided by the need to develop a plan that would ensure survival of the institution, uphold the core mission, and sustain program quality. With this strategy as our guide, a number of decisions were enacted, the most significant being a deep

reduction in force (RIF). Approximately forty positions were lost (50 percent of staff) due to the budget cuts; additional savings included identifying new organizational efficiencies, and reducing the number of contracts with external vendors and presenters.

Despite these severe cuts, we are able to keep both campuses open and provide an ongoing continuum of services to North Carolina’s educators. We have dramatically stepped-up our efforts to secure external funding through grants and contracts, and are actively forming a strong network of partnerships. As the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention and, while these initiatives are necessary to the survival of NCCAT, they are at the same time very exciting and are taking the institution in innovative directions.

In the weeks and months ahead, you can expect to hear about new program strands, alternative venues, and the forming of needed initiatives, particularly in the area of educational research and evaluation. I remain optimistic that the best years lie ahead for this remarkable institution, and I welcome your involvement as we take NCCAT deeper into the twenty-first century.

Warm regards,

Elaine Franklin, PhD
Executive Director, NCCAT

NCCAT gives teachers the support they need



SANDRA BOWLING

(Left to right) Richard Schwartz, president of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc., and Linda Suggs, chair of the NCCAT Board of Trustees, confer with LaChanda Broome, technology education teacher at Holly Springs High School in Wake County, during NCCAT’s “Connect to Your Future: Celebrating Success in the Classroom” seminar.

Join NCCAT’s online community

In a continuing effort to make the most of every budget dollar, NCCAT is transitioning to delivering more information electronically.

To ensure that you stay in the loop and benefit from all NCCAT offerings, please create a member profile at community.nccat.org. If you choose not to create a member profile, please send the following information to registrar@nccat.org:

- first, middle, and last name (former name, if applicable)
- name of school or organization
- teaching status (i.e. active or retired)
- work and personal email
- work, home, and cell phone numbers

NCCAT does not sell or share this information.

NCCAT helps beginning teachers master the learning curve and accelerate student learning

Every new job has a learning curve. However, when the new job is teaching, students simply cannot afford the time it takes to wait for a new teacher to master that learning curve. That is where NCCAT's Beginning Teachers Program comes in.

Since 1997, NCCAT's Beginning Teachers Program has helped the state's newest educators quickly strengthen their professional competency and create the support networks vital for success. The results have been more effective teaching, less frustration, and significantly higher retention rates for participating teachers.

NCCAT's Beginning Teachers Program actually consists of two components: *NCCAT Connections*, a yearlong program for first-year teachers, and "Connect to Your Future: Celebrating Success in the Classroom," a five-day residential seminar for second- and third-year teachers.

Rockingham County Schools has contracted with NCCAT for the past two years to provide *NCCAT Connections* for about 30 first-year teachers.

"The partnership with Rockingham County Schools and NCCAT remains one of the most active and vibrant teacher training partnerships I have experienced in my more than 20 years in education," said Dr. Rodney Shotwell, superintendent of Rockingham County Schools. "Given that effective teaching increases student achievement, the support and professional development *NCCAT Connections* provides creates a legacy in our schools."

In addition to Rockingham County, *NCCAT Connections* programs are also taking place this academic year with beginning teachers in Bertie, Clay, Edgecombe, Halifax, Hertford, McDowell, and Swain counties.

NCCAT Connections consists of ten monthly sessions at which NCCAT faculty cover everything from common concerns to the latest brain-based research to strategies for teaching diverse student populations. As Mischa Miles, a first-year teacher at Dalton McMichael High School in Rockingham County put it, "*NCCAT Connections* picks up where college leaves off. It helps you adjust (and most importantly understand the adjustments) to life as a teacher."

In addition, participants spend one weekend at NCCAT's Cullowhee campus for an intensive course on children living in generational poverty.

For Sarah Dunlap at Wentworth Elementary School in Rockingham County, the entire *NCCAT Connections*



RENEE COWARD

Beginning teachers from Rockingham County attending an NCCAT Connections session.

experience has made her first year a good one. "I know my content," said Dunlap, who teaches music. "However, teaching in a school system is about more than content. I have already successfully put in place several of the classroom management strategies."

For Amy Steere, who began teaching last August at Stoneville Elementary School in Rockingham County, it was the *NCCAT Connections* weekend dedicated to poverty that has helped her most. "I am older than most first-year teachers," says Steere, who is the parent of teenagers. "And I feel that my master's degree program prepared me well for the classroom. However, 15 out of 20 of my students are on free or reduced lunch. The weekend at NCCAT helped me see things from their perspective. As a teacher, it isn't just about the curriculum, you have to consider the whole package with a child."

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation of Winston-Salem provides support for NCCAT's Beginning Teachers Program. "The hardest time for teachers is those first few years," said Leslie Winner, executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. "NCCAT's Beginning Teachers Program helps teachers hone their classroom skills faster, so they can be more effective in helping students learn. The program also makes it more likely that new teachers will remain in teaching longer. This is an important investment in our state's teachers."

Shotwell, whose Rockingham district is low-wealth, couldn't agree more. "I know firsthand the impact NCCAT opportunities provided me both as a teacher and as a school administrator," he said. "To be able to afford the same opportunity to all our beginning teachers is immeasurable."

Holocaust education: Levels and levels of learning

Last November, a group of North Carolina teachers headed to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC to take part in NCCAT's "Teaching the Holocaust: Resources and Reflections" seminar. This professional development program in 2011 marked the eighteenth time NCCAT brought teachers to the museum and would not have been possible without the support of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Inc. and the Frank and Shelly Weiner Holocaust Education Teacher Training Endowment of NCCAT.

"NCCAT has worked with the Holocaust Memorial Museum longer than any other educational program in the United States," said Dr. Jonathan Wade, NCCAT lead fellow and coordinator of NCCAT's Holocaust Education Program. "Since 1994, this experience has never failed to inspire teachers to create incredible learning opportunities for their students."

According to Michael Abramson, chair of the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, "Teachers who have gone through NCCAT's programs have taken the lead to get Holocaust electives approved in their local districts. They are educating and inspiring literally thousands of children every year on the Holocaust, its history, and its timeless lessons. At the same time, they are promoting tolerance and diversity, and dealing with themes such as anti-bullying that make a difference in students' lives. The NCCAT programs are remarkable in their scope, their depth, and their impact." For many years, the council has contributed funding for vouchers for use in the museum bookstore to help teachers establish Holocaust resource libraries in schools across North Carolina.

"We teach the Holocaust unit in sixth grade," said Beth Knight, who attended the November seminar and teaches art at the Community School of Davidson in Mecklenburg County. "It is the same year we hit the anti-bullying curriculum hard. The study of the Holocaust is an example of intolerance, extreme quest for power and control, and fear of those who are different. We find students keeping each other in check after the Holocaust study."

That is just the beginning of what the Holocaust unit provides the school's sixth graders. Knight's colleague, Melissa Porter, who teaches social studies, designed an annual project around the unit that takes differentiating lessons to a new level.



Melanie Morgan (above), who teaches English language arts at E. B. Frink Middle School in Lenoir County, participates in an activity to help educators become better acquainted with methodological considerations for teaching the subject matter. (Left) Sixth-grade students at Community School of Davidson

create a model of the gate at the prisoners' entrance to Auschwitz that reads "Arbeit Macht Frei," which translates as "Work Makes You Free."

Each May, the sixth-grade students create their own Holocaust museum. "Students choose what section they work on," Knight said. "They do the research. They decide how to display their knowledge. They find themselves engaged in everything from reading and typing to designing, drawing, and building. We put our math teacher with groups dealing with numbers; our science teacher with students working on health issues; our music teacher works with students on the music exhibit and the opera *Brundibar*. There are so many levels of connection." And thanks to her NCCAT experience, she added, "This year, I will be able to bring in more about the role that art and propaganda played in the Holocaust due to the books and videos I purchased at the museum. I have so many new ideas."

NCCAT's Holocaust Education Program also includes an annual four-day alumni seminar titled, "Gathering of Holocaust Educators," which is scheduled for March 8–11 in Cullowhee.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Inc. generously awarded the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc. a total of \$145,000 in three grants since June 30, 2010 to fund the 2010, 2011, and 2012 "Teaching the Holocaust: Resources and Reflections" seminars and the 2011 and 2012 "Gathering of Holocaust Educators" alumni seminars.



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

Raising funds for Holocaust education

Last fall, Alfred and Anita Schnog hosted a fundraising event in Wilmington for the NCCAT Holocaust Education Endowment Fund. Alfred Schnog, who is a member of the Board of Directors of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc., escaped Nazi Germany as a boy and today speaks regularly about his experiences. Alfred said, "I don't want the Holocaust to ever occur again. Not in the United States, not anywhere in the world. Ensuring younger generations understand what happened is essential to that goal. Who better to endow with this history than the teachers who teach our children? And that is what NCCAT does so well." Anita Schnog added, "Saying 'never forget' is worthless unless you continue to teach the children about what happened and how it happened."

The event was attended by state and community leaders. Also attending were alumni of NCCAT's Holocaust education seminars who have become recognized leaders

in the field of Holocaust education. One attendee, Lee Holder, a social studies teacher at North Lenoir High School in Lenoir County, is a recipient of the prestigious Irena Sendler Award "For Repairing the World." The award is presented annually to one teacher in the United States and one in Poland for "innovative and inspirational teaching of Holocaust education."

NCCAT's Holocaust Education Program has multiple components. Since its inception, NCCAT has welcomed hundreds of North Carolina teachers into its intensive "Teaching the Holocaust" seminars held in Washington, DC, and an annual gathering of Holocaust educators in Cullowhee each spring. These seminars provide opportunities for public school teachers to engage directly with survivors and with some of the most authoritative scholars in the field in the context of a carefully crafted learning community (see story on page 4).

NCCAT alumni gather in Asheville

Teachers, administrators, and other NCCAT supporters came together to network and learn more about NCCAT's mission for 2012 at the NCCAT Alumni and Friends Holiday Gathering in Asheville in December.

"This event provided a wonderful forum for NCCAT alumni to discuss their work with colleagues," said Dr. Elaine Franklin, executive director of NCCAT. "It also gave attendees a variety of outlets to educate themselves further about NCCAT programming."

As part of a "seminar sampling" series presented during the gathering, NC Rep. Ray Rapp spoke to the group about Western North Carolina and where it fits in a global context. Dr. Jonathan Wade, NCCAT lead fellow, presented a program titled, "They Built More than Biltmore: The Architecture of Asheville." Teachers also screened *Saving the Hansen House*, a documentary produced by Will & Deni Films, chronicling the restoration of an eighteenth-century home in Bethania, NC. Will McIntyre of Will & Deni Films is a member of the Board of Directors of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

This event was made possible through a generous donation from the North Carolina Automobile Dealers Association Charitable Foundation. The NCADA Charitable Foundation was signature sponsor of the event.



(Left to right) David Farris, vice chair of the NCADA Charitable Foundation and board member of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc., welcomes guests to the NCCAT Alumni and Friends Holiday Gathering with Richard Schwartz, president of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc., and Dr. Elaine Franklin, executive director of NCCAT.

"Investing in NCCAT allows our foundation to leverage our charitable dollars," said David Farris, past chair of the NCADA and vice chair of the NCADA Charitable Foundation. "By supporting professional development for teachers, we affect students across the state and create a better place to live and do business for all of us." Farris serves on the Board of Directors of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

Additional funds were provided by platinum sponsor of the event, the Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program on behalf of Mr. Robert E. Merritt and Mrs. Cama C. Merritt. Robert Merritt is a former chair of the NCCAT Board of Trustees and a former member of the Board of Directors of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

7th annual A. Craig Phillips "Old Fossil" Golf Tournament on June 22 at Southern Pines

For more information, call Jim Simeon at 910-693-9910 or email foundation@nccat.org or jsimeon@nc.rr.com

NCCAT partners for principals

Twenty teachers from the Sandhills region of North Carolina gathered at NCCAT's Cullowhee campus last July to begin a new chapter in their careers. The five-day induction program was the opening session for the Sandhills Leadership Academy—a yearlong program offering an innovative approach to administrative licensure in North Carolina. At the end of their training, these teachers, turned executive interns, will be fully prepared and licensed to be principals in North Carolina public schools. An initiative of the Sandhills Regional Education Consortium, the academy chose NCCAT to design and facilitate the academy's induction week, as well as the program's closing session.

“We chose NCCAT to build our executive interns into a team,” said Jim Simeon, executive director of the Sandhills Regional Education Consortium and a member of the Board of Directors of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc. “We know and respect the quality of professional training that NCCAT has provided to North Carolina educators for decades.”

Dr. Donna Peters, executive program coordinator of the academy, said, “Holding the first intensive week at NCCAT allowed our executive interns to focus completely on learning what they needed to know in preparation for their internships. The learning environment and services provided by NCCAT were superb.” Peters is a former superintendent (retired) and the 2010 A. Craig Phillips Superintendent of the Year.

The curriculum for the induction week at NCCAT focused on strategic thinking for school leaders, approaches to data analysis for school executives, best practices for coordinating teams, professional standards, and formative assessment procedures.

The Sandhills region has twelve participating school districts. It has been estimated that within four years, this region will need eighty new principals. Also, the area is home to thirteen of the state's lowest performing schools.

“The traditional way of educating principals is not going to provide our region with the professionals we need,” Simeon said. With funding supplied by the Race to the Top grant and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the



The Sandhills Regional Education Consortium is a collaboration of twelve K–12 public school districts in southeastern North Carolina. The consortium is a strong partnership working together to ensure continuous professional development of its members for the ultimate goal of providing the very best teachers and leaders for students in the region.

consortium created the Sandhills Leadership Academy.

“Each of our interns is basically tied to the elbow of a top principal in our region for one year,” Simeon said. In addition, the interns visit turnaround schools, engage in a case-study curriculum and problem-based learning, and meet weekly with an executive coach.

According to Peters, “Our goal is to prepare highly effective principals who are strong instructional leaders and skilled at working closely with teachers to improve student achievement in turnaround schools.”

The Sandhills Leadership Academy currently has funding to train and graduate three classes. Throughout the process, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's SERVE Center will evaluate the program.

“We believe our approach to preparing principals to lead twenty-first century schools is going to make a real difference,” Peters said. “We hope that the success of our executive interns in their future roles will lead other regions in the state to use similar approaches to preparing principals.”

The Sandhills Leadership Academy's class of 2012 will hold its closing session at NCCAT's Ocracoke campus in July 2012.

For more information on the Sandhills Leadership Academy, visit the Sandhills Regional Leadership Consortium's website at www.srec.ccs.k12.nc.us.

For school groups and other educational organizations

NCCAT's residential campuses can serve as productive and energizing environments for meetings or conferences. For more information, call Natalie Kosnik at 828-293-5202 ext. 1114 or email natalie.kosnik@nccat.org.

Dropout solutions that work: Keeping students in school

Every school day, 7,000 students in the United States drop out of school. Dropouts from the class of 2010 alone will cost our nation an estimated \$337 billion in lost income over the course of their lifetimes. Thankfully, there are solutions that work—and that was the subject of NCCAT’s seminar “Dropout Solutions: Review and Implementation of Best Practices from the Field.”

The program was comprised mostly of teachers from Tier 1 counties (the most economically distressed in North Carolina) who had participated in NCCAT’s Beginning Teachers Program (see story on page 3), and other NCCAT alumni who had attended seminars designed to help educators work with “at-risk” students.

“Not only were they committing to attend a five-day training session at NCCAT’s Cullowhee campus, but also they agreed to participate in professional coaching and track their students’ progress,” said Dr. Ernest Johnson, the NCCAT fellow who designed and implemented the training for teachers. The seminar was funded by a grant from the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention, established by the North Carolina General Assembly.

Teachers participating in the program are being instructed in the intervention methodology and the assessments used to evaluate the impact of the project.

“We wanted to take our program a little deeper than just preventing dropouts,” Johnson said. “We want our teachers to be able to reach students who were physically in school

but not engaged. So we taught teachers how to form relationships with these students and, just as importantly, how to reach out to parents who are often not willing to be involved at school. We also gave teachers strategies for building executive thinking skills in students—skills that would help them make good decisions inside the classroom and out.”

Also, teachers were given the materials to start chess clubs in their schools. According to Dr. Leo Stefurak, a cognitive neuropsychologist and president of the Chess Mates Foundation, “Chess instruction informs the mind and the emotions in such a way as to structure an emergent mental circuit where motivation and ability multiply to produce achievement in chess and school and life.”

Once back at their schools and putting into practice what they learned at the seminar, teachers identified “at-risk” students and invited them to become part of the school’s new “chess champions” club.

“We are trying to motivate our teachers to work at the top of Blooms Taxonomy and to help students develop their critical thinking skills,” Johnson said. “The chess board is a natural playing field for students and teachers to engage. They learn collaboration along with strategic thinking. They learn to see their teachers as ‘coaches’ or mentors, someone on their side.”

A report and publications on the results of this program are expected sometime later this year.

Foundations invest in teachers through the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation renewed its commitment to support NCCAT’s Beginning Teachers Program. A grant totaling \$70,000 funded NCCAT’s “Connect to Your Future: Celebrating Success in the Classroom” five-day seminars (for teachers in their second or third year of teaching) in both 2011 and 2012. In addition, a remaining \$125,000 of an original \$250,000 funded the *NCCAT Connections* program (for teachers in their first year of teaching) for 2011–2012.

The North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention, established by the North Carolina General Assembly, awarded a grant of \$172,904 to develop and pilot a training program focusing on dropout prevention (see story above).

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Inc. awarded a total of \$145,000 in three grants since June 30, 2010 to fund the 2010, 2011, and 2012 “Teaching the Holocaust: Resources and Reflections”

seminars and the 2011 and 2012 “Gathering of Holocaust Educators” alumni seminars.

BB&T Charitable Foundation awarded \$15,000 to provide support for NCCAT’s “Dollars and Sense: Building Financial Literacy” seminar.

Duke Energy Foundation awarded \$12,500 to enhance education and economic development through excellent teaching. The funds will enable teachers to attend NCCAT seminars based in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics during the 2011–2012 fiscal year.

Harrah’s Cherokee Casino & Hotel awarded \$25,000 to conduct professional development seminars for educators from Cherokee Elementary School in Cherokee. Scheduled for spring 2012, these seminars will help educators align curriculum with the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, and create pacing guides for the 2012–2013 school year.

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Teachers and writers meet at NCCAT

For the sixth year, North Carolina public school teachers will meet and work with acclaimed writers during the NCCAT seminar “The Power of Words.” Each spring, the seminar is scheduled to coincide with Western Carolina University’s Spring Literary Festival. Through a partnership between NCCAT and WCU’s English Department, seminar participants attend festival sessions at WCU and attend special sessions that address the teaching of writing on NCCAT’s Cullowhee campus. This year, the NCCAT seminar will be held March 17–21. The festival is March 18–22.

Mary Adams, associate professor of English at WCU who had directed past festivals and is scheduled as a presenting poet this year, said, “The authors always comment on the wonderful audiences we bring to the festival and NCCAT’s teachers are a big part of that.”

A 2011 seminar participant, Anthony Swaringen of Alexander Graham Middle School in Charlotte, said, “As an English teacher, I rarely get to talk with authors

about their craft. Having the opportunity to hear firsthand about their intentions and reasons for their decisions has helped me lead my students to deeper analytical conversations about literature and writing. I returned to my classroom with a renewed passion for my subject area.”

“The authors we met offered many ways we could inspire our students’ creativity in writing.”

said Cathe Bradshaw of Evergreen Community Charter School in Buncombe County. “Bret Lott’s ideas on using lists and prompts with his college students gave me ideas for using these techniques with my first graders.”

Among the celebrated writers scheduled to present at the 2012 festival are Ron Rash, well known for his novel *Serena*; performance poet Glenis Redmond, whose latest collection is *Under the Sun*; and author of the acclaimed *Winter’s Bone*, Daniel Woodrell.



Ron Rash, author of *Serena*

MARK HASKETT

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