

DAKOTA TESOL

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MISSION STATEMENT

Dakota TESOL's Mission is to provide professional development and networking opportunities for ESL/EL professionals so they, in turn, can better meet the needs of those they serve.



DAKOTA TESOL PRESIDENT

Dyanis Conrad-Popova is an assistant professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of South Dakota with a teaching focus on Foundations of Education, the teaching of English as an additional language (ESL/ENL), and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. She has taught Spanish and French in grades 6-12 and ESL in K-16. Dr. Conrad-Popova's research interests center on social and educational inequalities, race and social policy, critical social justice, and the deconstruction and disruption of colonial legacies. In addition to Dakota TESOL, her professional memberships include the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).



DAKOTA TESOL PRESIDENT-ELECT



Dakota Breen received her Masters of Education in English Learner Education from the University of North Dakota (UND) in 2015. She also received her Bachelors of Arts in English Education with a minor in Spanish and an EL certification in 2011 from UND. She earned her National Board for Professional Teaching in Secondary EL in 2019. Dakota is in her 8th year of teaching EL Language Arts at West Fargo High School (WFHS) in North Dakota. Dakota also assumes the role of EL building level representative for WFHS in which she assesses, registers, and schedules English Learners as well as any state mandated testing of English Learners. In the spring of 2019, the staff at West Fargo High School voted Dakota as the WFHS Teacher of the Year. Besides having a passion for teaching English Learners, Dakota also works extensively within her district and school with using technology in the classroom. In her free time, she enjoys reading books, gardening, hanging out with friends, and spending time with her son, Nevada.



WE ARE AMERICA PROJECT

BY LEAH JUELKE

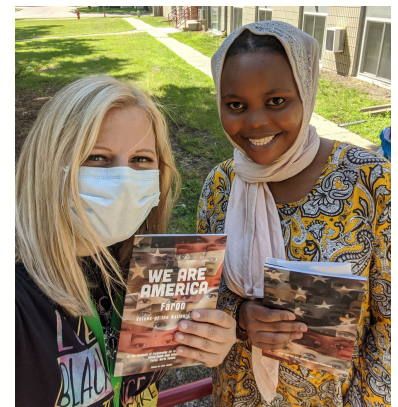
The We Are America Project is working with teachers and young people across the country to define what it means to be American, and to spark a new national conversation about American identity today led by the next generation.

This book was created in partnership with Jessica Lander, an EL teacher, and journalist from Massachusetts. She received a large grant to put together a curriculum and offer teachers from each state to apply for the project. Students and teachers worked on the curriculum throughout the year. Teachers can also hire a photographer or take professional pictures themselves (I did the pictures myself since I am also a photographer). Teachers act as editors and put together the stories to publish. Then teachers submit their photos and stories to The We Are America Project Team to have the book published. The team then sends the teacher 100 copies of the book to sell and distribute throughout the community. Some books are sold to help fund next year's project, since teachers will only receive free copies from the Team for one year, but are welcomed to continue to use the curriculum. Students involved also receive 2 free copies of their book. In addition, students record themselves reading the stories and submit the audio to the team so that they can feature the audio stories on their website. My class was the first in our state to produce a book for the project, as well as among one of the first states in the nation to contribute.

Students wrote about a challenge they had in their lives to help amplify student voices. Topics in the book include friendship, suicide, racism, a new culture, body image, and family. The book was created in my Partnership for New Americans class, that partners New Americans with students who were born in the US. Curriculum from 'The We Are America Project' was provided and students explored many topics through writing and other activities related to identity.

The hard copy of the book is for sale now! All proceeds go back into the project for students to create the book each year. Email me if you are interested. Also, the project is currently taking applications for classrooms to be a part of the 2nd cohort of the project! If you want to do this project with your class, google the We Are America Project website and contact them.

Here is the link to the audio of my students reading their stories.
<https://www.weareamericaproject.com/school/fargo-south-high>





**"AT THE END OF
THE DAY, THE
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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

BY JANE HANNEMANN

Family engagement in education is important. Jane D. Hull, former American politician and educator once stated, "At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents." In the state of South Dakota, all Title schools are required to provide a written parent and family engagement plan. That requirement relays the message that parents are an essential part of their child's education.

For the past eight years, I have served as Principal of two different schools in the Jane Addams building. One of those schools, All City Elementary, is a specialty school that requires parents to volunteer in classrooms every week. Test scores and attendance are consistently strong. While there may be several factors, I credit most of our success to the positive involvement of parents in our school.

The second school in our building is the Elementary Immersion Center, a school that serves students who are new to the country and speak very little or no English. While a variety of circumstances makes it difficult for involvement in the same way as All City parents, educators in our school have recognized the importance of the engagement of these newcomer parents in their child's education. Our staff has spent the past eight years learning about the best way to involve our



parents. Here are a few of the things we've learned:

1. The front office matters! Our clerical staff is well-trained in offering a smiling face and using the word "Welcome!" It is our goal to make families feel comfortable to ask questions. We use a variety of methods to communicate with them, such as on-staff interpreters, Google translate, and Language Line. It is also important that the Principal of the school become involved with each family, greeting them and offering help.
2. Assume that all parents want to understand. It is easy to identify parents who don't answer phone calls or don't check backpacks as uninterested in their child's education. However, they may not answer a phone call because they are afraid it will be in English or they don't know who is calling. They may not open their child's backpack because they don't know that is expected. Assuming best intentions allows us to educate, rather than judge.
3. Offer parents information in ways they can understand. Sending notes home to parents in their language is always an option if you have easy access to translators. However, we generally have had over twenty languages spoken at our school and are lacking translators for some languages. In addition, some of our families struggle to read in their own language. All of these issues make it challenging to communicate with families. For simple messages, we utilize these options:
 - a. *WhatsApp Messenger (used by our liaison): a freeware messaging service that allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other media.*
 - b. *TalkingPoints App (used by our teachers): a free app that helps teachers reach all parents regardless of language, via text messages in 100+ languages. Translation is done by a combination of human translators and machines, allowing for seamless communication with families.*
 - c. *Language Line (used by liaison, teachers, and principal): a phone service that utilizes interpreters from most languages, which requires a fee for each use.*
4. Face to Face parent meetings are essential for specific communication about a child. As a result, we often utilize our School Home Liaison to make home visits when we have important information to share with families. Teachers and the Principal will also make a visit, usually with the Liaison, who becomes a friendly face and a strong connection for parents with our school. Parent/Teacher conferences are also a way that the teacher communicates with the parent about student progress.
5. Whole group parent meetings are important for educating parents on basic school topics. This is why we schedule parent meetings about five times a year. When we began, about 20 parents attended. Now we have up to 50 parents in attendance. We have increased our communication through students, simple notes home, and Liaison calls. We also offer transportation by other district Liaisons for those who have no options for transportation. Many parents take work time off to attend these meetings, as they find them important for their own ability to help their child in school.
6. Topics for parent meetings are strictly school-related. We name our parent meetings *Parent University*, explaining to parents that this is their opportunity to learn. A committee works together to plan topics and the format for the meeting. We focus on topics that are essential for parents. Teachers plan the information to be taught. We remember that some needs of our families must be met by community services. The school cannot meet all of the needs. We must recognize the difference and educate families on what services can meet their needs.
7. Allow time to hear from parents. If the topic is focused on what students should wear for winter recess gear, ask parents to discuss and share how recess looked at their school. If the topic is on expectations of teachers, ask parents to discuss and share the expectations of teachers at their school. If the topic is on

learning to read or behavior expectations, ask parents to discuss and share how that looked at their own school. Let parents know that it is important to understand their culture in order to best teach their children.

These are just a few of the things that we have learned about what newcomer parents need from our school to become more engaged in their child's education. Most of all, what I have learned from our families is that they truly want to understand how we conduct school in our country. That understanding helps them to better connect their child to their new life in American school.

STORYTIME

BY ERICA BOOMSMA

Sitting on the floor of my classroom, with 26 fourth graders surrounding me, we were in the middle of their favorite time of day, the part of the day that they absolutely loved - I was reading to them. The book was "Amelia's Road" by Linda Jacobs Altman.

It was perfect! A real Norman Rockwell moment! Sunlight was filtering through the windows touching the faces of my students in our classroom in central South Dakota. These little cherub faces were so focused on the book that you could almost see the inner workings of their minds as they



listened to the story. This story about a little girl whose family were migrant workers that moved from farm to farm in order to work. This story that deeply conveyed the little girl's discomfort of moving from place to place, school to school, and shelter to shelter. This story that, at the heart, spoke of a child wanting a forever home.

It was then, that one of my students raised her hand and asked, "Is that what it's really like?"

To which a little boy in my class responded, "Yes."

What happened next was incredible. The young man, who was extremely shy, took this moment to open up and share parts of his own story. Some of the children nodded with understanding, while others were soaking in his every word. The discussion turned into questions and answers. Ipads had to be taken out to look up routes, seasonal produce, and places - which led to the discussion of mileage and cost of living. Wages were discussed. Education was talked about. Fairness became an issue.

I hadn't planned for any of that! But, it was fantastic. My kids were changed that day. I was changed that day. They had grappled with hefty concepts, encountered content from many subject areas, but most importantly they had a different respect for one another and a different "care" for one another. All because of a book - a children's book.

There is power in Children's Literature! The use of literature in our classrooms is research-based and is a scientifically sound practice. And, it is extremely important for our EL students.

Our brains, at every age, are wired for stories. When taught information through a story, your brain is 22 times more likely to remember that information than if it is given as a fact that you are taught in isolation. A story is 22 TIMES more powerful! This is our strength for learning information and retaining it best. And, these stories do not have to be lengthy to do the job. They can be a short metaphor or simile.

It gets even more amazing! You see, when you listen to or read a well-written story, your brain is able to "couple" and "mirror" what the author is saying. Neural coupling is a process that allows you, the listener or reader, to turn someone else's story into your own ideas and experiences. Mirroring allows you to experience the same brain activity as the author or speaker. In a very real way, your brain believes the story is actually happening to you!

Therefore, it is incredibly important that we purposefully incorporate well-written stories into our lessons. Providing our students with these texts gives them the opportunity to experience places, cultures, and the lives of characters. In this way, literature acts somewhat like virtual reality for our kids! Giving our students a window into another world or, in some cases, acting as a mirror into their own lives.

The idea that a book can be a window or a mirror was introduced by Emily Style. When a book acts as a "mirror", you will see yourself in the story. Elements of the book remind you of yourself, your family, or your beliefs causing you to feel a sense of connection. These books may also cause you to take a look at yourself in a deeper and more reflective manner.

For the young man I spoke of earlier, "Amelia's Road" was a mirror. He saw himself in that book. He saw himself in Amelia. And, because that book mirrored his experience, he found a connection. He gained the confidence to be open and vulnerable with his classmates because Amelia already had! So, he could, too. Although Amelia was a fictional character, to this young man, she was a kindred spirit.

When a book acts as a "window", the reader will be exposed to a world that is different from their own. Windows offer us the opportunity to participate in different cultures, religions, lifestyles, and so much more. Windows also offer us a chance to take on someone else's perspective. To take on someone else's journey, their feelings, and to experience them as our own. This is an incredibly effective way to build empathy.

For the little girl, I spoke of earlier, who wondered if someone's life could really be like that of Amelia's, the book was a window. The story gave her the opportunity to walk in someone else's shoes, to feel their experience as her own, and to develop empathy. Because this little girl was lucky enough to be in a very diverse classroom, she had the extra benefit of having a student, her friend, who could explain, first hand, what life as a migrant worker's child was really like.

So, on that day, with the sunlight streaming into our classroom lighting up the faces of children who were listening to a story seems like a simple action of reading and listening. It really was so much more than just that. These children were actively engaged and understanding. They were reflecting on a story as a mirror to their own lives or seeing and feeling a life they had never lived. They were learning in an advanced way, through our best method of teaching - through a story!

THE HUTTERITE CHILDREN'S DAY

BY KATHLEEN M. WOLLMANN

I interviewed three of my students at Maxwell Colony, Kaylea, Ruth, and Tyra, as to what their typical day is as a child on a Hutterite Colony. They get up in the morning at 7:00 and are in the children's kitchen by 7:15 to eat breakfast. The bell rings during the day, so the students know when they need to be at the scheduled place. They start eating in the Children's Kitchen when they turn 5 years old and move to the Adult Kitchen at 15 years old. They are assigned seats to sit at and are only moved if they talk too much. The girls are assigned to groups so they can take turns washing dishes. If the boys are late to the kitchen to eat, they are punished by having to help the girls.

The students need to be at German School by 7:40 AM. They start German School at age 5 and are finished with German School at age 15. In German School they learn from the German Bible. They learn Bible verses in German. If they don't learn their German lesson, they either have to write it out six times or have another sort of punishment. They have to talk German, not Hutterite while in German School. Morning German School ends at 8:30 AM.

Then, the students start English School at 8:45 AM. The same curriculum used in town is used at the colony. The students attend school in a multi-grade classroom. They attend English School from Kindergarten to 8th grade. At about 11:25 AM the Colony Bell rings to indicate the children need to go to lunch. Two older girls from Mrs. Wagner's room pick up lunch for the teachers and bring it back to the school. After lunch, a girl from Mrs. Huber's room and a girl from Mrs. Mehlhaf's room come back and pick up the leftovers to return to the Colony Kitchen. A list is made up so each girl knows when it is her turn.

The students have recess from the time they are done with lunch until 12:00. During recess, they play games; sled down the hill behind the school; or play basketball, football, and soccer.

At 12:00 PM, the students return to English School until 3:30 PM. At 3:30 PM, the students have a break where they go home and have a snack until 4:00 PM.

At 4:00 PM the children return to German School. They work on German Packets, spelling, and Bible Questions. The supper bell rings at 5:00 PM, so the children go to the Children's Kitchen for supper.

From 6:00 to 7:00 PM the girls go to a home and babysit so the parents can attend church at 6:00 PM and eat supper at 6:30 PM. The girls are asked to babysit a family's children, or they babysit their younger siblings. The students have to be in their homes by 8:15 PM during the school year, so they can study their German Lesson. German School is in session from October through April.

The boys are also assigned jobs, such as working with animals, gardening, raking leaves, and shoveling snow.

The Hutterite child's day is very structured, but it is a very effective system on the Hutterite Colony. The children know where they have to be and at what time. The children are assigned jobs, which instills in them a work ethic that carries over into the classroom.



**BECOMING
NATIONAL BOARD
CERTIFIED "IS FOR
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BECOMING A NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER

BY DAKOTA BREEN

This past December, I became one of 5,400 teachers to become newly National Board Certified. This brings the total of Board Certified Teachers to over 118,000 nationwide—about 3% of teachers. This article will highlight the National Board Certification Process for those interested in pursuing it.

What does it mean to become a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers a thorough and well-respected certification process for K-12 teachers. It is not a licensure process, but rather a voluntary process "designed to develop, retain, and recognize accomplished teachers" in schools across the United States (nbpts.org).

What are the motivations for becoming a NBCT?

For many educators, it is a way to challenge themselves and gain a prestigious title that takes them from classroom teacher to a leader in the educational field. Many states and districts also offer financial incentives for becoming a NBCT. For myself, it was a way to continue my professional development after having already earned my master's in education in English Language Learners and not being ready to pursue a doctoral degree. My state and district also offered a stipend for NBCTs.



How does it work and what do I need to do to become certified?

To become certified for the first time, you must have a bachelor's degree, a state teaching license, and three years of classroom experience before starting the process. You must complete four components during the certification process. The first component is a test in your chosen certification area and the other three are portfolios: Differentiation in Instruction (component 2), Teaching Practice and Learning (component 3), Effective and Reflective Practitioner (component 4). You can attempt all four components in a single certification year or spread them out over three years. You must attempt and pass all four components within three years. Each component costs \$475 to attempt and \$75 for the registration fee per year you take to complete all four components. Many states and/or districts will help cover the cost of the NBCT process, though.

I completed component 1 and component 2 during one year. Then I completed component 3 and 4 in the second year. I chose this route so that if I didn't certify, I would have another year to retake a component or two to reach certification.

Most people that I know attempt all four components in a single year. Most have been successful, but not all. There is no "correct" way to go about it and you must consider what would work best for you in your situation.

What should I know about becoming a NBCT in North or South Dakota?

In North Dakota, there are currently 61 teachers who have achieved National Board Certification and ND is ranked 44th out of 51 for percent of teachers certified. In South Dakota, there are 121 teachers who have achieved National Board Certification and SD is ranked 37th of 51 for percent of teachers certified.

For North Dakota, NBCTs receive a \$1,000 annual stipend for the life of their certificate through a federal and state dollar match. Districts across the state also offer stipends. For example, the West Fargo Public School district pays an additional \$2,000 annual stipend to NBCTs. ND Education Standards and Practices Board also offers funding for the cost of the components up front, but there is an application process and a limit to how many they will cover in a given year. It opens up in July. Email espbinfo@nd.gov for more information.

For South Dakota, NBCTs receive a \$2,000 annual stipend, good for at least five years. Half is paid by the state Department of Education and half by the school district. The South Dakota Department of Education will reimburse the cost of becoming certified (once you earn certification). Visit <https://doe.sd.gov/NationalBoard/> for more information.

For both states, NBCTs can often earn graduate credit by pursuing NB certification. It can also count as credit toward obtaining a renewed teaching license. "Board certification can enable teachers to take on leadership roles—such as mentoring, leading professional development efforts, and advocating for policy changes—that allow them to advance their careers while staying in the classroom" (nbpts.org).

What are the areas in which a teacher can be certified?

The NBPTS site boasts certification availability in 25 areas from pre-K through 12th grade. Since this is Dakota TESOL, I will focus on becoming certified in the area of English as a New Language, or ENL. There are two developmental levels to choose from when pursuing a certification in English as a New Language: Early and Middle Childhood (Ages 3-12) and Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood (11-18+).

What standards are assessed in the area of English as a New Language?

There are nine standards assessed throughout all four components while getting certified: knowledge of students; knowledge of culture and diversity; home, school, and community connections; knowledge of the English language; knowledge of English language acquisition; instructional practices; assessment; teacher as learner, and professional leadership and advocacy.

How challenging is it to become National Board Certified?

The process isn't for someone looking for an easy way to get recognized, but it is for someone who truly wants to become a better teacher. While I couldn't find an exact number, I've been told only around 50% of candidates get certified on their first attempt. I only passed by three points. To better illustrate the time commitment it takes to become National Board Certified, I'll break down my own experience. I didn't track my hours, but can at least share an outline of the requirements.

The first component (the test) doesn't come with many directions and study materials can be hard to come by. Since each certification area has different questions, I can really only give an overview of my certificate area: English as a New Language- Early Adolescence to Young Adult (11-18+). The testing window is generally open May-June and you have to sign up at a testing center to take it. The test itself takes around three hours to complete. Part of it is multiple choice and the other part is written response. The biggest help in preparing for it was honestly my experience as an EL teacher and EL case manager. The questions are mostly scenario-based - as in what would you do in this situation based on the given information?

The second component (Differentiation in Instruction) requires the completion of several context forms and a 12-page written commentary. In my certification area, I had to select two focus students and provide evidence of a pre and post-assessment given during two different units of instruction. The commentary focused on why I designed my unit the way I did to best meet the academic and English needs of my selected students.

The third component (Teacher Practice and Learning) requires several context forms, two fifteen-minute video recordings of yourself teaching from two different units of study along with two 4-page written commentaries on each of those videos. There is a focus on instructional strategies implemented and a reflection on the success of those strategies.

The fourth component (Effective and Reflective Practitioner) requires many context forms and a 12-page written commentary. The forms and commentary focus on providing evidence that you act as a leader among educators in your school and district.

What tips are there for someone trying to get National Board Certified?

The earlier you decide and commit to becoming National Board Certified the better. The registration window opens in the late summer but doesn't officially end until February of a given school year. Any components you sign up for in each cycle must be completed in May (for portfolios) or June (test). If you commit early on (say August), that means you can start planning, collecting evidence, recording, and writing throughout the whole school year.

Pace out your components. If you are attempting all four in one cycle, set goals to be done with component two by December, component three by March, and component four by May.

Read the directions carefully. Read them again. Read them a third time. There are a lot of rules and parameters to follow and you want to make sure you cover them all.

Find someone who has gone through the process and ask them to read your work and give you any feedback. There are several online groups where you can easily connect with people going through the process or who have gone through and been certified. Facebook has some of these groups. You can also reach out to me, Dakota Breen. I'd be happy to help with what I can.

Checkout nbpts.org for more information about the process and getting started.

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF DEAF REFUGEES

BY JENNIFER WARD

Throughout my career as a teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, I have taught many Deaf students recently arrived in the United States with little or very limited language, whether it be signed, spoken, or written. Some of these students' families had developed a form of home signs and gestures they used to communicate; others were living in situations where they did not have access to language or education. These students came to the United States from countries all over the world as refugees and immigrants. In many cultures, deafness is seen as a curse or a result of a wrongdoing on the part of the mother. This may result in the deaf child being kept home and not being allowed an education. In other cases, they may have come from rural, isolated areas where there were no schools for the Deaf or teachers trained in Deaf Education or sign language, therefore not giving deaf children the opportunity to go to school. For most of them, their first educational experience was when they arrived in the United States in upper elementary or middle school and, in some cases, high school.

Babies begin learning language from the moment they are born. However, 90% of Deaf children are born to hearing parents and as a result they are not automatically exposed to language the same way hearing babies are. Without this access to language and incidental learning, Deaf children are at risk of language deprivation. Language deprivation can seriously impact a student's cognitive development, their ability to think abstractly, and their higher-level functional skills.

Language acquisition is an important predictor for a child's success both in school and in life. In my experience, once these students start learning American Sign Language (ASL) and realize they can communicate in meaningful ways, they learn very quickly. However, older students and adults may struggle with retaining and understanding language and information.

Professionals working with Deaf refugees and immigrants, especially those with limited language skills, need to meet them where they are. Language instruction is unique for this group of learners. These students do not have a foundational language upon which to build American Sign Language or English. Not only do they need to learn language to communicate, but they also need to learn cultural and linguistic expectations. When these students begin school, the focus should be on building language skills before teaching the curriculum.

Deaf refugees have a unique set of needs from those of their hearing counterparts. In my work with Deaf adult refugees, they share stories of isolation, being overwhelmed, and feeling confused. Often, they don't know why they left their country, where they are, or where their family members are. A shared experience is the desire to learn language, receive an education, and provide for themselves and their families. As part of their resettlement process, Deaf refugees and immigrants should be connected to the local Deaf community as soon as possible, to begin acquiring language and help them better adjust to life in a new country and culture.

When these students arrive at school past the critical window age for language acquisition, it is critical to immerse them in a language rich environment - in a language which is accessible to them. For Deaf children, the relationship between home and school is critical. Families may need to understand that their deaf child can learn and be successful. For Deaf adults, support from the Deaf community and other Deaf refugees is key in their resettlement experience. Ideally, educational placement would be in a regional Deaf/Hard of Hearing program with peers and teachers who use ASL, and where instruction is provided in ASL. This is not always possible, especially in smaller, rural areas. In this case, it is important to provide access to a Deaf adult or peers fluent in ASL and to use any other available strategies for language acquisition.

Hard of hearing students may have more developed spoken and written language skills, but they can still be impacted by language development and need the support of a teacher trained in working with this population. Connecting the family to community resources is an important part of the process. Families may wish to pursue amplification such as hearing aids or Cochlear Implants but may need support to get started.

When working with Deaf refugee and immigrant students, start where they are by discussing what they know. Give them the language to talk about their families, friends, food, home, etc. Provide as many visual supports as possible - pictures, videos, gifs, and real objects are all excellent tools for building language skills. Build on any language skills they may already have in their first language, whether it be signed, spoken, or written.

As I mentioned earlier, for many students this may be their first experience with formal education of any kind. It is important to build confidence early with patience, lots of encouragement, and going at the students' pace.

<p>Dakota TESOL's Virtual Conference: Transforming Education November 5-6, 2021</p> 	 <p>with keynotes by Dr. Ayanna Cooper & Dr. Mejai Bola Avoseh</p>	<p>SAVE THE DATE</p> <p>Visit https://www.dakotatesol.org/ for more info.</p>
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NINA, THE ANSWER THIEF!

BY CHRISTINE MURTHA

ELL teachers who are a part of the WIDA Consortium know Nina. Nina is an interactive model student for the ACCESS 2.0 Speaking assessment. She is supposed to guide students on how they should be responding to the interactive teacher's questions. The teacher asks a question to Nina, she answers, and then our students are expected to answer the question without copying Nina's response. ELL students very much dislike Nina and ELL teachers have heard it over and over again, "Nina stole my answer!"

I started reflecting on how I had students prepare for what I call Nina Day. Early in the year I told them that I had sent her an email and we were collaborating together on tips and useful practices to outperform her on the WIDA assessment. The kids couldn't believe it. "What else did she say? Where does she live? How did you find her?" Nina is, without a doubt, a real person to them. One day, I told them Nina was coming to visit from California. They waited patiently as I went off to collect her from the office. I returned with a pigtail hairdo and disguised my voice to be more like a twelve year old's. They laughed, but went along with the act. They were mesmerized by her useful tips and suggestions on how to improve their discourse, sentence, and word/phrase levels.

Two years ago, one of my fourth grade students was able to experience the infamous Nina on the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 assessment for the first time. After every question, he would turn around in his chair, eyes rolling, and grumble, "Uhhhh, Nina stole what I was going to say." I kept encouraging him to try his best, but the moaning, whining, and grumbling continued. Every year since then when the ACCESS 2.0 assessment comes around he asks about Nina. "Will Nina be there? When will Nina's day be? I don't like her, where does she live?" He's obsessed over her and not in a positive way, he started to tell other students "Nina's an answer thief." We are now in the present year 2020 ACCESS 2.0 testing season, and he begins to preoccupy his mind with negative thoughts of her. Finally, speaking assessment day has come and I'm hyping him up, "You're better than Nina!"

What does WIDA do? Change Nina's picture! He is now caught up that this is not the same girl, this is not Nina. "Her hair is different. She looks older. How old is this chick? Her face isn't the same. I don't think her eyes were that brown. Why does she look so different?" I explain to him that she is getting older too and growing up just like him. "Uhhhhh no!" he groans. I ask him what is the matter? And he responds "If she is

older, that means she's smarter, better, and still an answer thief; I hate her even more." Needless to say, he was hung up on her picture transformation for another fifteen minutes. Undoubtedly, I'm not the only ELL teacher who continues to hear the moans and groans from their students expressing frustration over Nina, the answer thief.



DAKOTA TESOL BOARD

Dyanis Conrad	President
Dakota Breen	President Elect
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TBA	Secondary Ed
TBA	Higher Ed
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Kristina Starr	Hutterite Ed
Anna Brokenleg Keller	Native American Ed
Bobbie Kilber	Migrant Ed
Jane Hannemann	Administrative Rep
Leah Juelke	TESOL Liaison
TBA	Webmaster
Missy Slaathaug	Business Manager

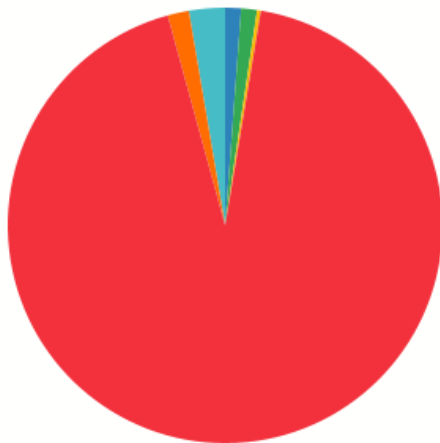
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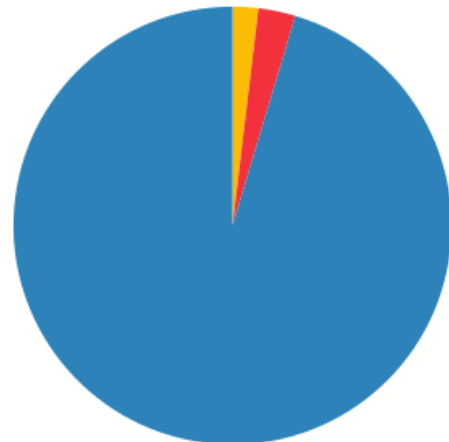
2019-2020 DAKOTA TESOL FINANCES AT A GLANCE

BY TARA ARNTSEN

Withdrawals \$17,087



Deposits \$23,801.33



● Membership (2%) ● Silent Auction (3%) ● Conference (95%)

● Website (1%) ● Annual fees (1%) ● New logo (<1%)
● Conference (93%) ● Newsletter (2%) ● Scholarship funds (3%)