EDUCATION Matters
in the Southwestern Union Conference
December 2023
Volume 28 • Issue 1

Seasoned: grace & salt Colossians 4:6

by Renee Whiting, Associate Superintendent of Education

The atmosphere was electrifying, as 185 academy students from all over the Southwestern Union territory converged upon Lone Star Camp in Athens, Texas, for Leadership Camp 2023. The theme, "Seasoned," taken from Colossians 4:6, served as the spiritual foundation for the weekend. This yearly pilgrimage serves to equip the next generation of Adventist leaders with the needed skills to evangelize their schools and community. Under the direction of the SWUC Director of Secondary Education and in collaboration with the SWUC Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Conference Youth Leaders, and the Student Association Leaders of Southwestern Adventist University, spiritual encounters, leadership training, and cultivated friendships became a reality.

The leadership team identified three overarching goals that they wanted every student to embrace as part of the "Seasoned" experience. The first was the importance of being called by God, the second was honing and refining their God-given gifts and talents, and then finally being anointed and unleashed to revolutionize their schools one event at a time.

Reminiscent of campmeeting services from years gone by, the students partnered in preparation for the preliminaries for each service. Practice sessions transformed into robust sing-alongs as students testified of the goodness of God through each note and word that was sung. The sermons were presented by a diverse host of speakers from pastors to student leaders. Thursday evening began with Pastor Carl Ming, Southwest Region Conference Youth Director, followed by Jose Castro, Southwestern Adventist University Student Association President, and Abbi Minnett, Southwestern University Student Association Religious Vice President. Sabbath morning began with a powerful message by Kent Rufo, Southwestern Adventist University Chaplain, and concluded with a charge to evangelistic leadership by Pastor Helvis Moody, Southwestern Union Conference Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

The students attended breakout sessions specifically designed to address their office. During those sessions, students were able to discuss the challenges of leadership while receiving instruction on how to effectively plan and navigate the inherent pitfalls that usually arise throughout the course of the year. Leadership can be a lonely pursuit if one is unaware of the support network that is available to them. To ensure that the students were aware and utilized all of human capital that was available to them, they participated in team building, recreation, and afterglow activities that fostered community regardless of school location. As the final meals were eaten, pictures and selfies were taken, and hugs of new and old friends were exchanged, Seasoned 2023 drew to a close with a promise that the encounter with Jesus would continue at each school when the leaders returned home.



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PURPOSE

Recruitment and Retention of Teachers

- Intro to Teaching Dual Credit Course—Contact Dr. Cheryl The (cthe@swau.edu) at SWAU if you would like your academy to offer this course.
- SWUC Teacher Education Scholarship
- SWUC Teacher Incentive—A retention bonus of $5000 will be given at the end of each of the first three years of teaching to SWAU teacher education graduates hired by the SWUC conferences. To be eligible for the bonus each year, the teacher must continue teaching for the conference the following year. The bonus is to be paid directly on student loans or paid as a lump sum to the teacher if the teacher does not have student loans.
- Aspiring Teacher Club—Scholarships are available to inspire the next generation of teachers from among our academy students. Contact Jackie Downs (jdowns@sffcfoundation.org) from the SFFC Foundation if you are interested.

PLAN

Kindergarten Curriculum

NAD is in the process of developing kindergarten resources in the areas of *Encounter*, *Pathways*, and *ByDesign Science* that align with the elementary curriculum.

Kindergarten Encounter Curriculum

- Units are ready to use
- Supplementary K kits are almost ready
- Most kit materials are in grades 1– 4 kits
- K–specific supplementary posters are almost ready
- Supplementary picture books will be available through Advent Source

Kindergarten ByDesign Science

- Standards–based units are being developed with the first unit ready to pilot in the spring
- One classroom per union will pilot

Kindergarten English Language Arts

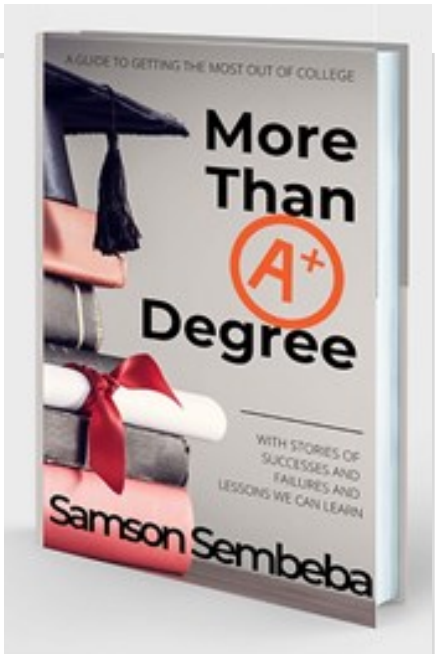
- The core texts have been chosen

Report Card Updates

- Notification field for reading levels (A to Z or Lexile) has been added, but will only present on the report card if the area is used

Book Review

More Than A+ Degree
by Samson Sembeba
A book on how to get the most out of college.
Great
for high school students!



NEW Secondary Social Studies Textbooks

The NAD Curriculum Committee has voted to approve new secondary social studies textbooks that were recommended by the social studies summer committee. The list of publishers that were approved are:

McGraw–Hill
Pearson
Houghton–Mifflin/Harcourt

The actual list of titles will be published on the NAD website sometime in January. If you need new textbooks, please consult this list. In summer 2024, the curriculum committee will review secondary science textbooks. If you are considering purchasing new science textbooks, you may want to wait one more year.

Early Childhood Update

The NAD Early Childhood Advisory Committee recently reviewed the progress that has been made over the past five years. Some of the highlights include data collection and supports for teachers, including free courses available on the Adventist Learning Community and the NAD Prekindergarten Assessment Toolkit which includes a developmentally, age–appropriate Prekindergarten Progress Tracker available on the NAD website.

The Committee also examined current challenges facing early childhood education and created a plan to address them over the next five years. In addition, several curriculum resources were reviewed that will be released in the upcoming year for infants, toddlers, and two–year–olds.

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PRACTICE

History Workshop

On October 9–10, 2023, secondary history teachers were able to join the history department of SWAU for meaningful dialogue and exchange of ideas. SWAU history department chair, Dr. Steve Jones, organized and led out in the workshop. The following topics were discussed: cross–curricular instruction, maps and digital humanities in the classroom, plagiarism, engaging pedagogy ideas, criminal justice, history education outside the classroom, faith and learning, and even a discussion on AI. The history teachers that attended felt it was very worthwhile and would like to have this type of workshop more frequently!

Summer Institutes

Elementary Math Institute, July 16–18, 2024 in Burleson, TX

Secondary Science Institute, July 15–17, 2024 at SWAU

ASCD

The ASCD Annual Convention is March 22–25, 2024 in Washington D.C.

Robotics

The Robotics Tournament is March 15–17, 2024 at Lone Star Camp. There is a second Tournament planned for February 28, 2024 in Bentonville, AR.

Parent Webinars

Access the Parent Webinar on MAP and a flyer that can be shared with parents. They can hover over the title for the Zoom link.

Educator Webinars

We have two more educator webinars scheduled for 2024. You can also access notes from the first two webinars.

Early Childhood Degree

An Online Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Care and Education is available from Washington Adventist University.

Thank you

Ellen Thomas
Outgoing Southwestern Union Conference
Early Childhood Education
Representatitve

SouthwesternAdventistEducation.com

Contact: education@swuc.org

PRODUCT

School Planning Documents

In addition to a CSI Plan, it is recommended that schools develop the following plans:

- Spiritual Master Plan
- Marketing and Recruitment Plan
- Technology Plan
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Professional Learning Plan
- Social Media Policy

Data Cards

Data Cards for 2023–2024 are available. Please let us know if you would like copies.

AE Connect

AE Connect, a student information system (SIS) designed by the NAD specifically for Adventist schools, is being piloted this year, with full implementation available next year. Read more about it here.

Data

Survey Data is available on Union–wide implementation of Continuous School Improvement (CSI) and Standards–based Learning (SBL).

Valuegenesis Data

A new website is being created to host the Valuegenesis4 data. Check back frequently, for new reports continue to be added. The password is faithorg.



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