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2007 Edvantia Highlights

A quick look at what Edvantia
achieved in 2007 to make 2008
even better for our clients

With links to information and
resources you can use
right away

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Charleston, West Virginia

www.edvantia.org

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2008 great—
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expertise to
your team
today.**



Dear Education Leader:

As you begin filling your planner with visions and actions for 2008, chances are, you've also spent time looking back at your 2007 accomplishments. We've done the same here at Edvantia, and we like what we see. In fact, we've decided to share a few highlights with our partners, clients, and other friends.

As you read our *2007 Edvantia Highlights*, you'll find links to several articles and other resources along the way. We hope you'll find our 2007 highlights report both useful and inspiring. Who knows? Maybe you'll think of ways we can work together in 2008 to improve education and student achievement in your state or district.

We look forward to hearing from you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doris Redfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doris Redfield, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Edvantia

**There's no such
thing as a dumb
question.**

Please ask if we can help with a particular challenge you are facing.

Whether you lead a school or district, a board of education or office within the state department of education, or a targeted educational program, we'll be happy to talk with you, do some brainstorming, and help you weigh your options.

To schedule a phone consultation, call 800.624.9120 or e-mail info@edvantia.org.

Solid Success for Edvantia and Our Clients

As it was happening, 2007 seemed like an ordinary year. But as we paused in December to take stock of Edvantia's achievements, we found evidence of solid success. This report hits the highlights and provides a big-picture look at our work, improvements made, services offered, and results achieved. Close-ups of selected contracts offer a glimpse at the breadth and depth of Edvantia's services to clients. More detailed information about Edvantia's services and accomplishments are readily available on our Web site: www.edvantia.org.

More Clients Are Choosing Edvantia

Edvantia remains focused on work that targets improved student performance as its ultimate goal. We won 47 new contracts in 2007, with award amounts ranging from a few thousand dollars to a few million. As a result of these awards, our technical assistance specialists conducted [Instruction and Learning Appraisals](#) across all schools in a West Virginia school district, and district leaders are now using this information to make improvements. We began multiyear [evaluations](#) of a Teaching American History project in Virginia, the REACH program in Mississippi, and the Tennessee Value Plus Schools. We won a 3-year award to provide teacher training and revise training modules for ninth-grade science through the Discovery Learning STEM Fusion Study. Our [Calibrate](#) team worked with CTB/McGraw-Hill to develop extended standards and achievement descriptors for the state of Wisconsin. And we'll continue to administer the Tennessee Exemplary Educators program and provide ongoing professional development to the state's school performance coaches.

Clients continue to demonstrate high interest in [ePD at Edvantia](#), our online learning environment for education leaders and practitioners. In Tennessee, about 3,000 users have enrolled in more than 5,000 class sessions. In Alabama, 121 principals and teacher leaders took ePD courses through the Alabama Leadership Academy. And in Georgia, we began registering 3,000 users in the fall.

More Educators Across the Nation Are Benefitting From Edvantia's Work

Some of Edvantia's 2007 work ended up in places where everyone in education can benefit from it. These places include our



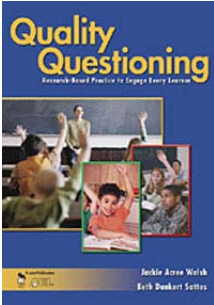
"I look forward to working with you; please call anytime."

*Dr. Kimberly Hambrick
Director of Corporate
Development*

Writing a proposal? Need an evaluation partner?

Successful program developers and proposal writers turn to Edvantia for state-of-the-art evaluation, development, and research services. For a free consultation on how we can partner with you, contact Dr. Kimberly Hambrick at 800.624.9120 ext. 5446 or kimberly.hambrick@edvantia.org.

The Center for Public Education



DistrictAdministration

The Magazine for K-12 Education Leaders



Tennessee Exemplary Educators

at EDVANTIA™

Web site and the Web sites of other education organizations, including the Center for Public Education and ERIC. The Edvantia-created information on these sites ranges from [research reviews on homework](#) and [helping English language learners succeed](#) to a “lessons learned” [report](#) from the national network of Rural Systemic Initiatives funded by the National Science Foundation.

Edvantia presented seven [webcasts and webinars](#) in 2007. Topics included teacher effectiveness and teacher equity, leadership in rural math and science education, data-based decision making, technology proficiency, what to expect from education program evaluators, and more.

Edvantia wrote regular Research Corner articles for *District Administration* magazine and contributed several articles and research briefs to the National Staff Development Council’s family of publications. One of Corwin Press’s best-selling books for 2007, *Quality Questioning: Research-Based Practice to Engage Every Learner*, was originally published jointly by Edvantia and Corwin Press.

Across the country, Edvantians made presentations at a variety of conferences, and staff members earned another first-place award (our sixth) from the AERA division focusing on evaluation and program development. On the international scene, Dr. Sandra Angius and Dr. Sharon Harsh traveled to England to present, by invitation, at the [Oxford Round Table](#). Dr. Harsh was also invited to serve as a Leader in Residence in West Virginia University’s Department of Educational Leadership Studies. Edvantian Carolyn Reynolds was elected to the Board of Directors for Region II of the National Coalition of ESEA Title I Parents.

Harvard University honored the Tennessee Exemplary Educators (EE) program—a collaboration between Edvantia and the Tennessee Department of Education—with a [Top 50 Innovations in American Government Award](#). The program stood out in a pool of nearly 1,000 applicants from across the nation, representing all levels of government and a variety of policy areas. Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in American Government program, characterized the winning programs this way: “These programs . . . have capitalized on creative thinking to increase the effectiveness of government.” Thousands of students at schools across Tennessee continue to receive the benefits of this outstanding program, which was highlighted in a 2007 public television program that has since been made available on [YouTube](#).

We've Increased Our Capacity in Research, Development, and Evaluation

In 2007, Edvantia added nine full-time research, evaluation, and development staff to the Charleston and Nashville offices. In addition, several top-notch education specialists joined our [National Faculty](#), helping us expand our staff's capacity to deliver expert guidance and services to current and future clients.

Edvantia also continued to invest in the professional growth of its staff. Several Edvantians took advantage of the corporation's educational benefits, which include training, formal educational advancement, and informal educational opportunities. The latter are exemplified by the monthly "brown bag luncheon" presentations conducted in-house to help Edvantia evaluators and communicators stay abreast of developments in program evaluation. In-house training sessions also helped staff upgrade their writing skills and maintain Edvantia's product quality assurance standards. Other professional growth opportunities were designed to help Edvantia staff view their work within the framework of a changing economy and adapt a strengths-based approach to meeting individual and corporate challenges.

We've Upgraded Our Business and Technology Systems to Serve Clients Better

Edvantia's portfolio of services is supported by a continuously improving infrastructure that includes business and technology operations. In 2007, our business office updated its accounting system to enable quicker and more accurate reporting. Our technology team updated our computer systems and programs. New servers were installed in our Charleston and Nashville offices to improve our IT Management, Web applications, and file storage capabilities. A new phone system prepares us to link voice mail and e-mail, and more staff members are trained to host Web meetings.

With help from the technology team, staff members have greatly expanded their abilities to design surveys and collect data online. We now have some major ongoing data collection efforts that rely exclusively on this technology.



"At Edvantia, I get a chance to learn something new every day."

Laurene Johnson, R&D Specialist (Technology)

Edvantia: A Great Place to Work

Edvantia continues to attract qualified professionals with a strong interest in working collaboratively with clients to improve education. The corporation has several programs for recognizing employee contributions.

For example, at Edvantia's [Golden Quill](#) awards ceremony in November, 14 employees were recognized for their scholarly work that contributed to the education knowledge base and/or to improved practice.

Our Employee Recognition Program recognizes excellence and helps Edvantians have fun along the way.

Close-Ups

Coaching Low-Performing Schools to Success: Tennessee Exemplary Educators

www.edvantia.org/about/index.cfm?&t=about&c=tnee

Client: Tennessee Department of Education

Contract: October 2005 to June 2010

Service area: Tennessee

In 2000, before the federal No Child Left Behind legislation was even written, the Tennessee Department of Education invited Edvantia to collaborate on a major effort to research and implement sustainable school improvement. The collaboration has developed into a remarkably successful partnership.

Since 2001, more than 150 experienced educators have received ongoing, intensive training designed and delivered by Edvantia. These professionals, called Tennessee Exemplary Educators, or EEs, have assisted approximately 227 high priority schools and 26 high priority districts. EEs use coaching techniques to build staff capacity in core areas associated with improved performance and student achievement. They have helped 124 schools achieve AYP for 2 consecutive years, with another 35 eligible to come off the school improvement list in 2008.

The EEs themselves work as consultants under contract to Edvantia. Through the program, directed by Dr. Steve Moats, Edvantia hires, trains, and manages EEs in their day-to-day work with schools and districts. In fall 2007, 88 EEs were working in 139 Tennessee schools, and EEs also provided support in some district offices. This past year, EEs worked with the state department to pilot test a district audit process that will help the state plan differentiated technical assistance. Former EE Karen Barron now takes responsibility for monitoring the progress of restructuring and reconstituted schools, and she provides technical support to EEs in the schools.

Bring School Performance Coaching to Your State or District

Edvantia's professional development for external change agents is based on research, established professional development standards, and years of experience.

Our [School Performance Coaching](#) training is available to states, districts, and schools.

Could your state or district benefit from a customized program such as the one in Tennessee?

To schedule a free phone consultation, contact Carolyn Reynolds:
800.624.9120 ext. 5447,
carolyn.reynolds@edvantia.org.

Helping Families Stay Involved and Informed: West Virginia Parent Connections at Edvantia

<http://wvpc.edvantia.org>

Client: U.S. Department of Education

Contract: October 2006 to October 2011

Service Area: West Virginia

West Virginia Parent Connections is a Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC). Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, these centers are charged with helping schools meet NCLB parent involvement requirements, informing parents about NCLB (e.g., school choice and supplemental educational services), and supporting an early childhood program (Parents as Teachers) to help families get children ready for school.

Regional Resource Partners assess client needs in each of the state's three regions and work with project director Anita Deck to optimize services based on these needs, particularly in counties that the state has targeted for extra support. Activities for 2007 included 18 teacher training events, a special meeting for parents, and a forum for parents and educators. In its work with the national Parents as Teachers (PAT) organization, WV Parent Connections is training 20 Parent Educators to help build the state's cadre of providers. Each educator reaches 50 to 80 families in the course of a year.

In December 2007, WV Parent Connections unveiled its Web site. Because of its small staff and large service area, WV Parent Connections will depend heavily on the Web site to deliver information. Parents and educators have called the site colorful and easy to read. The site includes information about NCLB and Title I, research nuggets, strategies for schools to get parents more involved in education, and links to resources such as the Harvard Family Research Project and the U.S. Department of Education. A free resource offered by WV Parent Connections is a PDF document titled *The ABC Book of Educational Terms: A Plain Language Guide for Parents*.

In the works are information briefs on aspects of Title I and NCLB and materials for a literacy resource kit for teachers and parents. This kit is being adapted from one produced by our partner organization, the University of Tennessee Center for Literacy Studies. In conjunction with this kit, Edvantia is preparing a new edition of *Horace the Hugging Hippo*, a read-aloud book originally published by Edvantia as part its early childhood work, which included the creation of Family Connections.



"We have two main jobs: to help parents and educators understand the parent involvement aspects of NCLB and to help parents and educators find ways to work together to improve education for their children."

*Anita Deck, Director
WV Parent Connections*

Connecting Schools and Families

Many K-2 programs order Edvantia's Family Connections learning guides each year and use them to engage parents in meaningful activities with their children at home.

To view the teacher's guide and sample issues, go to www.edvantia.org and click on "Products," then "Online store."



“We work closely with states to help them design strategies for instruction and assessment that help English language learners achieve.”

*Robert Hagerman
ELL Specialist*

Get Resources and Information Online

You are invited to browse the many resources ARCC has assembled at www.arcc.edvantia.org.



Helping Five State Departments of Education Achieve Their Goals: Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center

www.arcc.edvantia.org

Client: U.S. Department of Education

Contract: October 2005 to October 2010

Service Area: Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia

The Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, or ARCC, is one of 16 Regional Comprehensive Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Guided by a 20-member advisory board, ARCC delivers differentiated technical assistance to state education agencies in five states. The objective is to increase the capacity of states to implement the No Child Left Behind Act and improve student achievement. Although the paths to improvement vary among the states served, ARCC’s capacity-building work generally falls into five areas: assessment and accountability, teacher quality, statewide systems of support, instructional improvement, and parent involvement.

ARCC conducted several regional events in 2007. These regional institutes, forums, and webcasts gave state education agency personnel opportunities to learn from experts and from one another as they explored topics such as sustaining success in high-performing schools and working with English language learners. States also had 24/7 access, via the ARCC Web site, to an expanding database of products and services provided by the five national federally funded content centers and related programs.

An intriguing example of ARCC work in Tennessee focused on highly qualified staff. ARCC supported the state department of education in the collection and analysis of data related to Tennessee’s Teacher Equity Plan. In the plan, Tennessee committed to taking this analysis one crucial step farther—to examine the disparity in teacher effectiveness across schools, based on student poverty and race/ethnicity. Working with Dr. William Sanders and data from his value-added system, ARCC supported the development of a research brief titled *Tennessee’s Most Effective Teachers: Are They Assigned to the Students Who Need Them the Most?* Because equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers has emerged as a hot topic, the ARCC hosted [two national webinars](#) to report the results of the Tennessee study. In October 2007, ARCC partnered with the Tennessee Department of Education to begin working with the six largest districts in the state with the greatest inequity in the distribution of effective teachers.

Leadership in Math and Science Education: The Coalfield Rural Systemic Initiative

www.edvantia.org/about/index.cfm?&t=about&c=CRSI

Client: National Science Foundation

Contract: 2002-2007, with a no-cost extension for 2007-2008

Service Area: 18 school districts in the coalfields of southwestern Virginia and southern West Virginia

Encouraging young people to get involved in math and science is part of the long-term solution to math and science teacher shortages in rural areas, says Dr. Keith Smith, director of the Coalfield Rural Systemic Initiative (CRSI). Funded by the National Science Foundation, CRSI has involved Virginia and West Virginia teacher-leaders in 18 rural school districts in high-quality professional development to improve the districts' capacity to improve and sustain high-quality math and science education programs. Edvantia adopted a data-driven approach to improvement while working with several regional institutions of higher education and two state departments of education to build synergy for positive, sustainable changes. Teacher-leaders continue the work initiated through CRSI, and at least 20 of 42 educators who received intensive training through the project have since moved into leadership positions, where they continue to be strong advocates for high-quality math and science programs.

In June 2007, the Council of Chief State School Officers hosted a [webinar](#) featuring highlights from a report produced by Edvantia for the National Science Foundation, offering insights into the systemic improvement of mathematics and science education in rural areas. Dr. Smith moderated as a panel of experts examined NSF-funded Rural Systemic Initiatives, their results, and lessons learned.

The National Science Foundation is now considering a supplemental grant for Edvantia to conduct a national symposium on the "payoff" of leadership initiatives fueled by Rural Systemic Initiatives across the nation. If the grant is approved, Edvantia will conduct the national symposium in 2008 in Washington, DC.



"Helping rural schools improve and sustain mathematics and science education is a challenge, but we know it can be done."

*Dr. Keith Smith
Project Director*

Lessons Learned

Rural schools across the country have found ways to help their students succeed. Read *A Legacy of Leadership and Lessons Learned: Results from the Rural Systemic Initiatives for Improving Mathematics and Science Education*, available free on our Web site.



“Responsiveness and rigor are two words I use to describe Edvantia’s approach to evaluation.”

*Dr. Kristine Chadwick
Co-Director, Institute for
the Advancement of
Research in Education*

Evaluation Is Our Business

Edvantia’s evaluation specialists can design a research or evaluation plan, identify or construct the needed instruments, perform observations, conduct the analysis, and write clear and usable reports of the findings.

Want to know more? Take a look at our online [portfolio](#).

Providing Evaluation Services to Grant Seekers: Teaching American History

Clients: Local education agencies and their partners

Contracts: Seven 3-year evaluation contracts since 2001

Service area: Florida, Virginia, West Virginia

Edvantia has been involved in the Teaching American History grants program since it was first announced by the U.S. Department of Education in 2001. Early on, Edvantia hosted an informational seminar for potential grant seekers in the eastern United States. Since then, Edvantia’s evaluation experts have been asked to provide external project evaluation services to seven local education agencies who ultimately received Teaching American History grants. Clients include one in Florida, four in Virginia, and two in West Virginia.

The purpose of the discretionary grants is to improve teachers’ knowledge of American history through intensive, ongoing professional development. Grantees must work in partnership with one or more organizations that have extensive knowledge of American history, including libraries, museums, nonprofit history or humanities organizations, and higher education institutions.

In each case, Edvantia worked closely with the client during the proposal-writing stage. Our evaluators’ goal was to design an evaluation plan that would help clients win a grant—and deliver useful information to the client after the proposed work was under way.

In 2007, Edvantia’s Year 1 evaluation report for the People and Moments in Time project in Virginia was awarded **First Place** from the American Educational Research Association in the Division H Outstanding Publication Competition in the category of program evaluations studies.

Adding to the Education Knowledge Base: Early College High School Study

Client: KnowledgeWorks Foundation

Contract: 2006-2009

Service area: Ohio

Several major foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, are funding the creation of 150 to 170 early college high schools by 2008; 12 regional foundations and other organizations are partnering to implement the initiative. The goal? To identify and support at-risk students who want to succeed academically by helping them complete up to two years of college coursework by the time they graduate from high school. Often, these students are disproportionately minority and/or economically disadvantaged.

KnowledgeWorks Foundation, which leads the initiative in Ohio, wants to add to the limited research base on this innovation. The foundation contracted with Edvantia to conduct research and evaluation that can guide efforts to implement effective strategies and influence policy issues related to initiatives that bridge high school and college.

What kinds of benefits accrue from this type of high school reform? What factors influence the development and sustainability of an early college high school in Ohio? To answer these and other questions, Edvantia is conducting a mixed-method evaluation that involves several discrete components:

- Population-wide strategies include analysis of local and state policies that may affect the initiative, analysis of the benchmark data from Ohio early college high schools, focus groups with coaches, and participation in the Evaluation Advisory Committee.
- Longitudinal case studies of six early college high schools include semiannual site visits. Data collection techniques include student and parent focus groups; principal and student shadowing; school, district, and higher education administrator interviews; teacher/instructor interviews; and document and record reviews.

In 2007, Edvantia delivered the first annual report, which established the baseline for quantitative data analysis and included detailed case studies.



"It's very satisfying to work on projects that meet our clients' needs and contribute to our overall knowledge of education practice."

*Georgia Hughes-Webb
R&E Specialist II*

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Resources for Right Now



Webinars and Webcasts

Parent involvement, rural math and science education, program evaluation, teacher quality, and other topics—all are free on our Web site.

- Two of our federal contracts provide an array of free resources to educators and families. If you haven't taken advantage of these, please visit the sites of the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center at Edvantia (www.arcc.edvantia.org) and West Virginia Parent Connections at Edvantia (www.wvparentconnections.org).
- For immediate access to Edvantia's archived webcasts and webinars, go to our home page (www.edvantia.org) and click on "Products," then "Online Event Archive."
- Edvantia has reviewed the research literature on two topics—homework and preparing English language learners for success—for the Center on Public Education. These reviews and related documents are available online (www.centeronpubliceducation.com).
- Research Corner articles published by Edvantia in *District Administration* magazine are archived on the magazine's Web site. Go to www.districtadministration.com and type "Research Corner" in the search box.
- Find even more free resources on our Web site. Go to www.edvantia.org and click on "Products," then "Resources." There you can browse by topic and access tools such as the District Audit Tool and the K-12 TCO Calculator.

The K-12 TCO Calculator



About Edvantia

Edvantia is a nonprofit education research and development corporation, founded in 1966, that partners with practitioners, education agencies, publishers, and service providers to improve learning and advance student success. Edvantia provides clients with a range of services, including research, evaluation, professional development, and consulting.

For more about Edvantia's products and services, contact info@edvantia.org

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