



National Institute for
Student-Centered Education

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Engage. Inspire. Learn.

About NISCE

The National Institute for Student-Centered Education (NISCE) provides a powerful virtual meeting place for all education stakeholders – teachers, administrators, parents, mentors, and students -- who embrace the demands of today's learners, who recognize the huge impact of resources outside the traditional classroom, who encourage students to follow their passions and instincts and who support deep and impassioned learning for today's students.

NISCE acts as a catalyst for broad-based support of transformative visions of learning -- ones not tied to historic, one-size-fits-all, teach-to-a-test methods so common in our schools, but ones that truly embrace innovation, forward thinking and exploration as the keys to constructing meaningful educational experiences. NISCE brings together all those who are passionate about building on the inherent variability of every learner and who are committed to keeping students at the center of all learning.

Through its yearly conference and its rich webinar programming, NISCE explores critical education topics for today's schools, teachers, parents and students, such as:

- The role of technology in individually paced learning;
- Gender differences in the learning process;
- Social interactions and relationships as key components in education;
- Skills mastery for advanced education, career success, and life problem-solving;
- The consequences of standardized testing models vis a vis No Child Left Behind and Common Core;
- School leadership and creativity in the education experience.

HISTORY

NISCE was founded by leaders from Schools for Children, Inc. in 2012. Its mission is to help schools be communities that both inspire and support students to be passionate about their learning while preparing them to play active and productive roles in their world through a student-centered approach to education.

NISCE provides opportunities and platforms for education professionals to share ideas about trends in education and for students, parents and teachers to share their observations, thoughts and feelings on how those trends are playing out at the school level.

The NISCE philosophy is a natural outgrowth of Schools for Children, Inc. (www.schoolsforchildreninc.org) and its work managing three independent and alternative schools in eastern Massachusetts. As the president and executive director of Schools for Children, Theodore H. Wilson III, Ph.D. recognized the similarities in the challenges and successes each of the three schools faced despite the differences in their student populations. At the intersection was the student-centered education model.

After fruitful discussions among his colleagues at Schools for Children, the conversation widened and it became clear that many education stakeholders – teachers, administrators, politicians, parents and students themselves – were invested in the student-centered approach...and NISCE was born.

ACTIVITIES

Webinars

NISCE conducts frequent webinars on timely and relevant student-centered education topics, such as differentiated learning, supporting social and emotional development, building and maintaining supportive learning communities, and exploring the use of technology in the classroom.

Each webinar features experts in the field, and can be used by educators not only to enhance their classroom practices, but also may be used to fulfill their Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) and Professional Development Points (PDPs).

INSPIRE

Each year, NISCE hosts the INSPIRE conference for hundreds of education stakeholders – teachers, administrators, policy makers, parents, mentors and students – to educate, challenge and inspire those working across the PK-12 learning and education spectrum in areas as diverse as child development, research, psychology, teaching, policy and leadership, and special education.

INSPIRE draws high-profile keynote speakers to address thought-provoking educational issues. Workshops and discussions are led by teachers, practitioners and experts in the fields of education, neuroscience, and psychology and will share proven strategies and techniques on how to bring student-centered education practices to the classroom.

Resources

Through its website www.nisce.org, NISCE provides valuable research, resources and an up-to-date blog that keeps readers informed on latest trends, news and perspectives.

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Executive Bios

Theodore H. Wilson III, PhD

President and Executive Director

Founder Ted Wilson serves as the president and executive director of NISCE, where he draws from his long career in education, nonprofit management, special education, social work, residential treatment, counseling, educational research, early childhood care and education and fundraising. Ted is also president and executive director of Schools for Children, Inc.

An active member of the Massachusetts education community, Ted has served on the boards of the Massachusetts Association of 766-Approved Private Schools and the Cambridge Montessori School.

Before joining Schools for Children and founding NISCE in 2012, Ted directed the VFW National Home, a residential child care program in central Michigan with a 640-acre, 60 building campus, served on a local Board of Education, and spent three years as an officer in the US Navy.

Ted is a 1968 graduate of Yale and earned both an M.Ed. (1973) and a Ph.D. in (1979) from the University of Maryland. Ted is also certified as a Michigan social worker and holds a national certification as a fundraising executive.

Dale Lemke

Director of Finance and Operations

Dale Lemke joined NISCE in 2012 as director of finance and operations to launch the initiative, while continuing to serve as director of finance and operations at Schools for Children, as he has since 2009. Dale serves on the finance committee for the town of Winchester, Massachusetts and is trustee of The Greenwood School in Putney, VT.

Previously Dale worked in a variety of corporate settings where he specialized in strategic analysis and planning, financial operations and business process improvement.

He has an MBA (1984) in finance and international business from Columbia University, an MA in international relations from Schiller University (1981) and a BS (1979) from Northwestern University.

Alyssa Kierkegaard

Program Director

Alyssa joined Schools for Children in 2011 to help direct the launch of National Institute for Student-Centered Education. In this role, she is responsible for developing strategic partnerships with individuals, schools, organization and companies that support the movement towards student-centered education, and developing NISCE events - including the annual conference, an ongoing webinar series, and professional development opportunities for K-12 educators.

Prior to joining Schools for Children, Alyssa successfully led the development and marketing of many events and initiatives at the World Congress, Linkage, Boston University, and Design Management Institute.

Alyssa has a BA from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and a Certificate of Meeting and Event Management from Northeastern University.

Melanie Tringali

Director of Marketing & Communications

Melanie joined NISCE at its inception in 2012, after having served at Schools for Children in a variety of roles since 2002.

Prior to joining Schools for Children, Melanie worked as a marketing and communications consultant serving both for-profit and nonprofit sectors in such industries as high-tech, education and finance.

Melanie holds a BS in marketing and economics from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Board of Directors

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