

ARE SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS REALLY “JUST SAY YES” PEOPLE AT HEART?

by Virgil Harden, Business Director, Grand Island Public Schools, President, Nebraska Association of School Business Officials



Harden

School business officials (a.k.a. bean counters) often get a bad rap, perhaps more accurately than not, for making financial decisions based solely on the beans. In defense, over the short term that is a major part of our job. We like to call it keeping our superintendent/board out of hot water. However, most education-type folks (internal and external to the organization) see it as being penny pinchers or in technical terms “tight wads.” The problem is not that we cannot or will not spend money, but that we often say “NO” in somewhat funny ways that confuse people. In a vain attempt to prove my point I am taking a lead from the ever popular “David Letterman’s - Top Ten

List.” So here then is, in my opinion, the Top Ten Ways Business Officials Say No!

10. *I don't have adequate information to make a decision at this TIME*
9. *Let me review your request and I'll get BACK to you*
8. *I'll take your request to the Board for approval sometime SOON*
7. *Your request is OVER my spending limit so we have to go out for bid*
6. *We do not have any need for what you are requesting EVER...*
5. *Your request has not been budgeted this fiscal year, MAYBE next year*
4. *Costs are up FORTY percent so discretionary spending is frozen*

3. *You cannot really be SERIOUS about this request, can you?*

2. *You were SUPPOSED to purchase that with the ESU Coop order*

1. *NO, and what part of NO don't you understand?*

To counterbalance the known propensity of school business officials to say no our colleagues have, of course, come up with some so-called tactics to “hook” a yes out of us. By sharing these with you I am placing my life in jeopardy with my fellow school business officials. But for everyone’s sake I must push forward. Some of the best are “You are the BEST school business official I have ever worked with,” “Your audio-visual budget presentation last night was a TOTAL
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The mission of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) is to be an effective leader for quality education and to enhance the professionalism of its members.

NAESP Announces...

Outstanding New Principal of the Year



Worrell

Cory Worrell, Principal of Lincoln Elementary and Montessori School in Norfolk has been named the Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals Outstanding New Principal for 2005-2006.

Worrell, in his fifth year as an elementary principal, is described as a “winner” and true difference maker in the lives of students and staff. He has worked hard to improve both his
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2006 National Distinguished Principal



Murphy

The National Distinguished Principals Program is jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals in corporate partnership with AIG VALIC. The program was established in 1984 as an annual event to honor exemplary elementary and middle school principals who set the pace, character and quality of education chil-
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POVERTY AS A FACTOR IN SCHOOLS

by Dr. Dick Eisenhauer, Superintendent, Lexington Public Schools

The reading I have done states it and my experience and observations confirm it that poverty, more than other factors that have a negative impact on readiness for school or success in school, is most significant. Regardless of race, background, language, or other issues, poverty transcends all.

In terms of readiness, there is little question that children in poverty environments grow up without the experiences and stimulation that provide a foundation for success in academics, and often creates accompanying situations that lead to social and behavioral issues in adjusting to new expectations that often do not mirror or even come close to the learning that the child has experienced so far in life.

Despite disagreements about what is

developmentally appropriate, it is clear that an expectation of academic exposure and content is present in most Kindergarten classes. Much of the social and academic "readiness" that used to be associated with Kindergarten is now being provided in Pre-K situations. Children in poverty generally do not have the books and experiences related to readiness in the home environment since their economic situations and often the parental knowledge about the importance of developing school readiness is missing at home and therefore not provided. Parents do not often see the reasons for Pre-K experiences, or see how they can provide them. Private providers are often out of economic reach, and Head Start limited in availability. Babysitting is not always of high

mental stimulation for readiness, other than sitting and watching television. Books, educational games, planned activities associated with learning readiness are often not part of the daily routine. Additionally, the "working poor" due to jobs, if not simply too tired, do not have the opportunities for quality time to read to their children or develop readiness skills.

The result is kids who enter school already "behind" and who will soon be "left behind" unless interventions are made or provisions for quality Pre-K programs provided.

Assumptions that these children cannot learn and catch up are faulty. In Lexington, the data and programs of the Early Learning Academy for example, have demonstrated continually the abilities of small children to respond to challenges and expectations. There simply must be first availability and access, secondly, opportunity for exposure to learning opportunity, and thirdly, a well developed curriculum and program that addresses the basic needs as well as pre-academic challenges. In our case, we are fortunate to have an exemplary Business-Education partnership with Tyson Fresh Meats so our Early Learning Academy is at the packing plant. This unique situation is great for the majority of parents who work at the plant; so many issues of transportation are avoided. Transportation is a big issue for people in poverty. Our location also favors parental involvement, which is a huge challenge for many parents, but particularly for poor people who do not enjoy lots of free time or availability for other things than trying to get by. We see a real advantage to having Pre-K in Elementary Schools, but whatever the location, the benefit in addressing readiness and subsequent academic achievement is indisputably linked. Never allow yourself to think these folks don't care about their kids. They do, but just often do not know what to do or how they can get it done, and never assume that a child cannot learn just due to his/her background with the right teachers and

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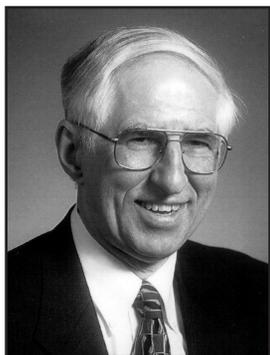
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PERSPECTIVES

by Jerry Sellentin, Ph.D., Executive Director



Sellentin

WHAT IS REALITY?

At a recent reception I had a discussion with a person I had just met. During the conversation I learned she was a RN who worked with Alzheimer's patients. As our conversation continued, we approached what is reality? What is reality to me, you, your staff, school board, community, and friends? Is the glass seen as half full or half empty? What is reality to an Alzheimer patient? What is reality to individuals from different generations? What is reality to a student who is trying their best to achieve, but faces problems at home that the school is not aware of? What is reality to the Nebraska Council of School Administrators in providing value for your membership? As a council, do we face reality and risks by taking positions on legislation? Would reality be better if NCSA did not take positions? I believe reality is for NCSA to do something rather than nothing. I also recall visiting a number of years ago the office of Ed Johnson, retired Superintendent of Syracuse, Dunbar, Avoca, and seeing on his office wall the quote, "If you try to please everyone you will fail." As administrators, I'm sure you will agree with the quote if you try to please everyone, you will fail and the same applies for NCSA. Another way of looking at reality is a quote I picked up from Dan Ernst, Superintendent of Waverly Public Schools: "Putting more feathers on a buzzard will not make an eagle. But, if you fly high enough no one will know the difference." How will you look at reality in 2006? What is reality in having all students be successful?

EMERGING ADMINISTRATORS

Thirty-five educators participated in the NCSA Emerging Administrators program on January 21st and 28th. The reality is we have some very bright educators who want to be administrators.

UNION PACIFIC AND SECONDARY PRINCIPALS

Union Pacific started a program in 2002 working with secondary principals across the United States. In 2006 the program involves 1,000 principals and will include high school principals from Nebraska in communities where Union Pacific serves as a railroad. The mission of the program is to "assist public high school principals to meet their leadership needs." The program includes a leadership institute, personal consultants as requested, and professional development opportunities for NCSA. There is no cost to the school district or principals. Union Pacific believes it has a responsibility to associate itself with a critical need in American Education, and to further its commitment to be a good corporate citizen. The program is endorsed by the National Association of Secondary Principals. Nebraska schools include: Omaha, Millard, Westside, Fremont, Columbus, Lakeview, Gibbon Grand Island, Grand Island Northwest, Kearney, Cozad, Gothenburg, Lexington,

North Platte, Gering, Morrill, Scottsbluff, Fairbury, Kimball, Sidney, Falls City, West Douglas and Elkhorn.

INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

This time of the year a number of school boards are searching for an administrator. I thought the following questions from Clark County, Las Vegas, NV in their search for a superintendent were of interest.

1. Is the No Child Left Behind a good law? Why or why not?
2. If you had ten million dollars of "found money" what would you spent it on.
3. What would your first memo to the school district outline?
4. If this job were an elected one, what would your message to the parents and community be?
5. If the concern of the district is being too large what would you do explain or change these concerns?
6. What do you see as the biggest issue facing this district? Do these questions show reality?

NAESP Outstanding New Principal of the Year

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schools and provide academic success for all students. His skills include being a leader, a listener, a supporter and a team player. Worrell is also known for his fun-loving personality, positive attitude and work ethic, all of which makes working in his buildings a rewarding experience.

Mr. Worrell's early career accomplishments include the creation of an optimist club at school called Alpha Club in an effort to create a service mentality for students, implementation of the "Stop and Think" Social Skills Program, and creation of a school-business partnership with Tyson Foods.

Ryan Voegler, a sixth grade student at Lincoln Elementary, says "The thing I like best about Mr. Worrell is that he is

very caring. He cares that every student is always on his or her best behavior. In the winter, he makes sure that everyone dresses warm enough." "Mr. Worrell is a cool principal. He deserves to get this award because he is trusting."

Mr. Worrell is an active member of the Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals (Region III President in 2004-05), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Norfolk Area Chamber of Commerce, Norfolk Noon Optimist, United Way volunteer, and Nebraska School Masters. He will be recognized at the NAESP Legislative Conference in Lincoln on February 27 and 28, 2006.





GET IN THE GAME

by Dennis Berry, Principal, McCook Junior High School

Although some may think it is unusual for a school administrator to be mayor; it actually isn't much of a stretch.

Both positions require a working knowledge of budget, finance, taxation, mediation, mill levies, regulations, asbestos, personnel, grants, OSHA, state and federal laws, bonds, security, ADA requirements, and a myriad of other such items. Both positions also require building public trust and confidence.

Although there exists a variety of intrinsic and personal reasons why anyone would run for public office, from a parochial professional perspective of a school administrator; there are several compelling issues why it is important for a school administrator to be active in city government.

First and foremost, to win the game, you have to get into it. Regardless of what you want to do with your professional life, in order to do it well, you've got to go to where the game is being played and get involved. There is an old adage: "If you are not at the table, you are probably on it." Therefore, getting a seat at the table accomplishes several things. It is how you meet people that are influential. It is how you learn the internal politics of the community. It is how you put your school in a position to be dealt a winning hand, to be tall when the lightning strikes. Plus it probably prevents you and your organization from being ravaged.

On a purely financial basis, a healthy city with a growing population means an expanded tax base equating to more available revenue for schools. A vibrant city means a growing school age population, and since enrollment is a factor in state aid to education, this also increases financial resources available. Additionally, a strong local economy provides an opportunity for greater contributions and donations to the schools.

The preeminent postulate for involvement by educators in the betterment of the community, however, is not money, but rather student academic achievement. Most research has indicated there are three factors with the greatest impact in the academic success for

a child: 1) the educational level of the mother; 2) the socioeconomic status of the family, and 3) the quality of the teacher.

If economic development is a priority of the community, then quality jobs will be available. Quality jobs are most often filled with educated adults and educated adults most often demand high wages and benefits, thus items one and two on the afore-mentioned factors influencing achievement have been addressed. A corollary to a strong and vital community is that it is easier to attract and maintain educators in a community where the quality of life is enhanced. Therefore, the better the community the greater the probability of academic success of the students.

Cooperation and collaboration between a city and the school are also advanced when school personnel are involved in city government. Examples would include but are not limited to greater knowledge of and availability to grants for items such as shared tennis courts, ball diamonds, school resource officers, safety and security equipment and training, connectivity of library/media centers, and cooperative purchasing. Interaction by employees of both organizations is also improved when school personnel are active in city affairs.

Anecdotally, election of school personnel to the city council enhances the credibility, trust, and confidence in the entire school system. This strengthens the reputation and faith in the school system as a whole.

Education in Nebraska continues to swim in a rolling sea of need. This need must be fixed and just defending the status quo is not good enough. To make an impact on schools, we must improve society as a whole, community by community. The first step is to expand our vision past the school house doors and share it with the entire community. One of the best ways to influence the community is to get into a position of influence. To get in the game, you first must get to the table and to do that you must take the risk and run for office. 

NAESP 2006 NDP

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dren receive during their early school years. Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals selected **Mark Murphy**, elementary principal from Centennial Public Schools, Utica, Nebraska, as this year's Nebraska Distinguished Principal Award recipient. .

Mark has received three degrees from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. In 1991, he received a Specialization in Educational, Administration and Supervision Degree. In 1983, Mark received a Masters of Arts, Guidance and Counseling Degree and in 1978, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science, Teacher Certification Degree.

Mark began his teaching career as a science teacher for Oakland-Craig Public Schools, Oakland, Nebraska in 1978. Then in 1981 he continued teaching science for Elmwood Public Schools, Elmwood, Nebraska. In 1984, he moved to Utica, Nebraska, to work for Centennial Public Schools. Mark served as the school counselor for ten years from 1984 to 1994 and then was named as the Elementary Principal in 1994. Since 2004 Mark has served a dual role as Elementary Principal and the K-12 Curriculum Director.

Mark is a leader in his profession and is also a leader in his community. Mark's professional activities include National Association of Elementary School Principals, Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals, Nebraska Council of School Administrators and Phi Delta Kappa. Community service participation includes the Utica Lions Club, United Methodist Church, Cub Scouts, and Youth Baseball.

A special ceremony and celebration was held at 1:00 P.M., Friday, February 3, 2006 at Centennial Elementary School, Utica, Nebraska. Then, Mark will be honored again in October, 2006, in Washington D.C. where he will join the other NDP recipients from each respective state. 



MOMENTUM BUILDING ON RETHINKING THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

by Donlynn Rice, Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction, Nebraska Department of Education

Nebraska currently has over 90,000 students enrolled in 343 public and nonpublic high schools. Nebraska statistics, according to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, show that of every 100 students who enroll in our high schools, 84 will graduate within four years. Approximately 60 of those will enter some type of postsecondary education. Of the 50 that enter a four year college system, only 38 will return for a second year and a mere 22 will receive a Bachelor's Degree within six years of entering. The completion numbers for minority and low-income students are even lower. How do we turn all of this around? How do we make this issue a priority at the national, state, and local level?

On the national level, the high school experience has been the focus of recent meetings of the National Governor's Association, the Chief State School Officers Association, the United States Department of Education, the Gates Foundation, as well as many professional organizations, including the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the Education Trust. Many recent publications have highlighted the issues including the Expectations Gap, 21st Century Learning, A Nation Deceived, and NASSP's "Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform."

Nebraska has been focusing on the high school since 2004, when the State Board of Education held a statewide series of five community forums with a variety of participants including educators, local board members, community members and students. The questions asked were: What should a high school diploma mean? What should be done to make the high school experience more meaningful to all students? How do we keep all students engaged? How do we prepare students for successful transitions? Participants offered their input and ideas to the State Board of Education on how to make sure that 100 percent of all who enter Nebraska high schools leave

fully prepared to be successful in post-secondary education and/or the world of work. They provided suggestions beyond academics on how to guarantee that all students feel wanted and connected to other students and adults. How can all of these things lead to a rewarding, well rounded, high school experience for all Nebraska's youth?

As a result of the forums, Commissioner of Education Doug Christensen convened a task force to review the recommendations and study the current research. The group was co-chaired by Ann Masters of the Nebraska Department of Education and Rick Kolowski, principal of Millard West High School. The task force presented its findings to the State Board of Education in February of 2005. The recommendations were based on the new three "R's" — Rigorous, Relevant, and Relationships. The recommendations were that all Nebraska high schools must be places where adults and students are: 1) fully engaged with each other; 2) feel connected to each other; and 3) exhibit commitment to each other's success. High schools need to be places where everyone is engaged in learning and instruction. High schools need to be tailored to the strengths, needs, and interests of each student and staff member. High schools need to provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum, and be places that focus on relationships to ensure the success of all students.

Following the recommendations of the task force in June of 2005, the State Board of Education approved three concept statements about high schools that focus on:

Collaborative Leadership and Professional Learning Communities

Comprehensive change involves everyone, school leaders as well as all staff members that interact with students. Everyone needs to feel ownership and be a part of the planning for change. This concept statement challenges adults to be role models for students by continuing

with their own learning. It highlights the need for schools to continue practices that recognize diversity.

Personalize the Teaching and Learning Environment

All students need to be fully engaged, feel a sense of belonging, and take responsibility for their own learning. Students, parents and educators need to work collaboratively to develop a personalized learning plan that builds on each student's strengths and interests.

Curriculum Standards, Instruction, and Assessment

Schools need to continue to provide an academically rigorous and relevant curriculum that is connected to real-life applications. They need to provide students with a variety of instructional strategies and learning environments in addition to equipping all students with the skills to successfully transition to the next level.

(This previous three paragraphs represent a brief overview of each of the statements. For a complete review of each statement please see "High School Improvement Concepts" on the NDE web page at www.nde.state.ne.us. The statements can be found under the article "Time to Rethink the High School" by Commissioner Doug Christensen—originally published in this newsletter in 2003—also a great review!)

The State Board of Education's goal in adopting these statements was to have them serve as a vision and provide guidance for individual or groups of schools as they worked together to rethink the high school. This is exactly what has been happening. At the local level, many school districts have taken big steps to rethink their high schools. Several districts have initiated study groups. Many have begun working on personalized learning plans. Some districts have structured their high schools around learning academies. Some are rethinking their school day and

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THE ROLE OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, OR SCHOOL

by Carl Ashman, Assistant Principal, Minden High School

Everyone has to take it upon themselves to be a positive person. It's not something you should have to work on. It should come naturally. I had the good fortune to have great parents. They taught me what was right, wrong, and to be courteous and respectful to everyone. I didn't always do what they expected of me, but they tried their best to lead by example. I try to do the same to everyone I meet. Being courteous, respectful, and positive encourages others to do the same, I thought. Not in today's society. I have found in the last few years being an assistant principal that most students don't give or show respect and aren't courteous to their peers, elders, or fellow students. I look back to my childhood days and think what's going on, where did we lose respectfulness and being courteous? Why can't we say prayers and sing the National Anthem?

Does it fall on the parents, teachers, or the school to bring back this old trait? Encouragement, enforcement, and education are words that could be used to bring back being courteous and respectful. We want all students to function as intelligent, concerned adults after they leave high school. We want our school to serve as an instrument for the betterment of the individual, school, and community. We want our students leaving with leadership and character, to be model students and citizens.

Remember when we all took gym, not PE. Flunking gym was not an option, even for special kids. We didn't want to stay in detention after school. We had school nurses who wore a hat and everything, and she could even give you an aspirin for a headache or fever. I can't remember ever being bored; we were always doing something outside. We didn't have computers, Play Station, Nintendo, X-box or 270 digital TV cable stations. Most of us didn't have a TV that got more than two channels, let alone have a TV. By the way what was color TV, other than a red, blue, green, screen taped over the front of your set? We wore black or white high

top shoes instead of cross-training athletic shoes with air cushion soles and built-in light reflectors. We didn't act up at the neighbor's house either, because if we did, we got our back side spanked there, and then we got spanked again when we got home. Where have we gone wrong, or have we? Maybe it will never get better, but I think it can.

Here are a few examples of what we



see in the hallways and the outskirts of our school. We see students being disrespectful in the classroom by not doing as instructed by the teacher, not listening in class, using swear words, and talking back. If I would have been disrespectful and my teacher saw my parents and mentioned it to them, "Katie bar the door." The first thing we hear from the student when sent to the office is, "I didn't do anything; the teacher is picking on me." As you walk through the halls, you can see candy wrappers, pop bottles, assignments, and money (pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters) on the floor. I guess I'm old fashioned, but in my time money bought a lot of candy. We didn't throw money in the halls - we picked the money up. We have plenty of waste baskets around the school, but I guess it

is easier to throw trash on the floor. Few students will bend over and pick anything up. Whatever happened to taking pride in your school?

Whoever heard of having pop, candy, and snacks in your locker? My parents used to feed us breakfast, or we waited for lunch and our sandwiches were wrapped in wax paper, in a brown paper bag, not in icepack coolers, and I can't remember anybody getting e.coli. Most of us either ate at school or brought a sack lunch. Now students rush downtown to Pizza Hut, Southfork, Sub-Way, Uncle Neal's, Casey's or the grocery stores to eat lunch, then are late for afternoon class. Some students will bring food back to school and throw their empty paper and containers on the floor after they are through eating.

Whatever happened to walking to school, in a snow storm, uphill, both ways? We have parents allowing their kids to drive to school, and they just live across the street or a block or two away. We have students drive out of one parking lot across the street into another parking lot. That is the most ridiculous thing I have ever seen. When I was a young boy we had one family car and your dad drove that. When you did get a car, a hand me down from an older brother, you could only drive on weekends; then you had to be home by 10:00 p.m.

Where do kids get all their money? They always have big bills. We take in more twenty dollar bills at ball games than we take in ones, fives, or tens put together. The ones, fives, and tens we had were pennies, nickels, and dimes. I don't think our parents even carried twenties. We still have students helping themselves to other students' money, but instead of students having a few dollars in their lockers they have \$50-\$150 dollars. What are they doing with that kind of money at school and where do they get it? Why would you bring that

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Book Review by Ron Joekel

Five Regions of the Future

Written by Joel Barker and Scott Erickson
New York, New York: Penguin Group Publishers (2005)
ISBN: 1-59184-089-9

I find that it is easy to get into a pattern of only reading books about education and become trapped into thinking only about the present. We are living in a rapidly changing world today and on occasion, I like to read what people who are identified as “futurist” are writing about, and how it impacts education. I suspect that a number of us recall a videotape that was widely circulated about 15 years ago where we were introduced to the term “paradigm shift.” It was based upon Barker’s book titled, *Paradigms*. It basically challenged us “to think outside the box” and to think creatively about how things might be done differently. I specifically recall one of the illustrations he used was the person who took the standard one-piece bicycle seat and made it into two separate pieces, to provide support for each cheek which was more comfortable!

Are we driving technology or is technology driving us? How should we use technology to shape our world? How does technology impact our lives? These are some questions that we have to deal with. Barker and Erickson take a look at the future and from a technology perspective they outline five powerful and profoundly different regions shaped by different technologies and the values that underlie them. Barker believes that the commonly used terms “high tech” and “low tech” no longer suffice. With the plethora of new technologies emerging in all fields, he says we need a new way to look at technology. Barker and Erickson have created a new paradigm that explains five very distinct kinds of sophisticated technologies that each has its own unique traits and benefits.

They believe that in order to define the technology of the future, the current landscape must first be mapped out. In doing so, they devise the term “TechEcology” which defines the type of technology era we live in, and apply the definition to five distinct regions or ecosystems. The five regions or

TechEcologies the authors identify are:

- **Super Tech**—Bigger, better, more—“Bigger is beautiful” (e.g., nuclear reactors and fusion reactors)

- **Limits Tech**—Be careful with what you’ve got—“Efficiency is beautiful and use what you have more intelligently” (e.g., aerogel insulation)

- **Local Tech**—Think small, think home—“Small and local is beautiful” (e.g., electric wind turbines)

- **Nature Tech**—Be one with nature—“nature is beautiful” (e.g., organic plastics)

- **Human Tech**—What lies within us—“We are beautiful” (e.g., stem cells)

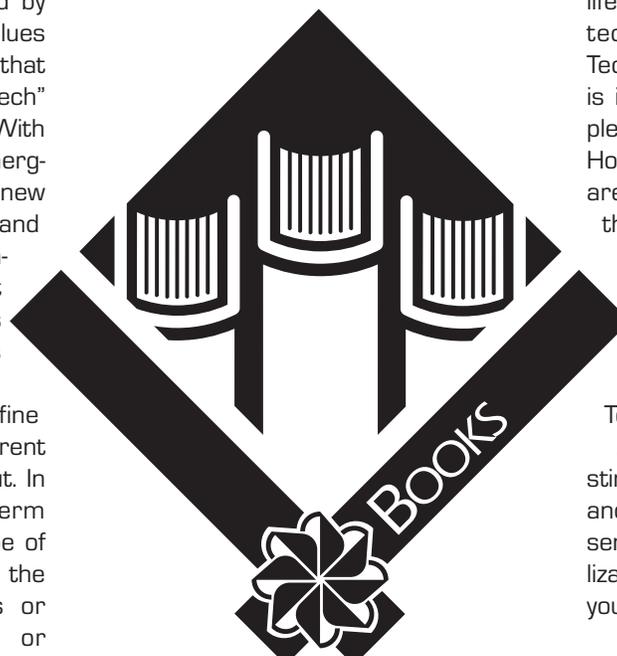
Each of the five regions is further explained as a chapter whereby the authors paint a vivid picture of each region by identifying its unique purpose, giving a number of examples of the technologies associated with the region, and constructing a narrative that offers further insights. For myself, the concept of technology regions allowed me to expand my cognitive horizon on how I tend to see the various technologies in application, while also expanding my visiting new worlds of application. The observations put forth in the five regions are

intertwined with science and research, and helped me to think about the future utilization of technology. We all have our bias when it comes to technology and the future and looking at each of the five regions helps the reader to be aware of their thinking and bias. For example, do we see technology as unbounded...or creating new problems that tend to overwhelm us? Do we see the race with population and pollution as unwinnable...or as easily won? Do we see the giant technologies or do we look for what is small and beautifully efficient?

Barker states that “we wrote this book for two important reasons. First, to alert people to the fact that we are living in an extremely unusual time. Today there are multiple ways to solve the world’s problems and the solutions we choose today will drive us in dramatically different ways. Secondly, we, as individuals, communities, corporations and nations will have the opportunity to choose which way we go and the choices will resonate not just for 5-10 years, but will impact the world for at least five decades. We are at a crossroads and the choice is ours.”

Do you prefer to live a local tech lifestyle or are you wild about super tech? To gain insight into which TechEcology you prefer, an online survey is included in the book for you to complete and I would encourage you to do so. However, don’t be surprised if the results are not what you expected. When I took the survey, I found that for several questions it was very difficult to choose just one answer. I wanted to choose several answers and combine regions. Maybe our future lies in a combination or amalgamation of TechEcology!

An easy to read book that will really stimulate your thinking about technology and the future. It left me intrigued with a sense of excitement about the future utilization of technology, and I believe it will you as well.





VOICES FROM FCS PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by Tami James Moore, Ph.D., CFLE Associate Professor, Family Studies Program, University of Nebraska at Kearney & Sylvia M. Asay, Ph.D., CFLE Associate Professor, Family Studies Program, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Family and Consumer Sciences programs in the secondary classroom are facing tenuous times in many school districts across the United States. The State of Nebraska has experienced a slow, but steady decline in the number of programs at the grades 7-12 level. The number of post-secondary programs training future FCS teachers has also dropped in terms of institutions offering and students enrolled.

INTRODUCTION

To understand the current status of FCS programs in high schools in the State of Nebraska, the authors secured research funding from their institution. Recent findings from this research project, utilizing data gathered using the focus group methodology have been analyzed. These voices from the classrooms, the communities, and the administrative offices provide both insights and further questions for the profession.

Administrators

Participants attending an annual state conference were invited on a voluntary basis. The resulting group included principals and superintendents with both geographical and school site size representation across this state. Although school location was important in these discussions in terms of sharing teaching assignments and offering courses through distance learning technology, school size appears to be of greater importance in terms of program viability. The following common themes emerged in the data analysis process.

Teachers

Administrators were quick to note that the success of FCS programs in their current and previous schools is intensely linked to the personal and professional impact of the teacher(s) in the classroom, school site, and community. When you are dealing with elective classes, you better have good dynamic people

in order to keep those programs strong. Although stronger in smaller schools, the need for FCS teachers to have multiple endorsements was also important across all school sites represented. Several participants reported that their FCS teacher was one-half time at their site and then shared with other schools within their district or in close geographic locations. Others indicated that FCS teachers were serving as part-time FCS staff and part-time counseling or other programs.

Curriculum

Subjects offered within the FCS curriculum at these schools varied greatly, however, participants were quick to recall traditional Home Economics elements that currently exist, citing purchase of sewing and cooking equipment and supplies as both commitments to the programs and as administrative challenges. As the discussion continued, administrators expressed their concern that within the contemporary social environment, classes and instruction on decision-making, survival skills, and relationships were becoming more essential for their students' future success. They firmly supported these subjects within the FCS programs, but expressed fear that resource constraints threatened their continuance. Increased graduation requirements and the focus on core curriculum subjects are negatively impacting elective programs, such as FCS, in terms of resources and scheduling constraints. Participants in both large and small school sites discussed the permeable boundaries of elective subject programs. Larger school participants discussed how the repetition of certain subjects, such as career exploration and job skills, across multiple vocational programs allowed their students increased accessibility and fewer scheduling problems. As the size of the school decreased, a blurring of subjects and programs increased. Health, business, and even agricultural subject matter had

been combined with FCS curriculum.

Administrative Challenges

Budget cuts have been major challenges for school administrators in this state for the last few years. Depletion of resources was of major concern to all participants. Most citing program eliminations in their current schools, or at past sites, directly connected the two. Only two closures were attributed to poor program and/or staff performance. It's the budget situation again, that's driving a lot of this. It's not the program itself. Another problem presented was that of replacing FCS teachers scheduled for retirement, now and in the next few years. Our teachers are pushing 50. Where is that next generation coming from? In terms of future teacher shortages projected, these administrators were already facing difficulties when searching for FCS teachers to fill open positions. A third problem discussed was that of supporting FCS programs when threatened. Administrators, across size and geographic placement, expressed concern that the programs were not being adequately promoted by the profession, the teachers, and the other important institutions.

The Future of FCS in Secondary Schools

When asked to consider the future of these programs in their schools and across the state, participants returned to three themes already discussed: teacher shortages, curriculum clarification, and budget concerns. All were very positive in their expressions that FCS programs and curricula are essential for student success in the "real world". However, all also expressed concern that these programs would not survive the threats they see in the next few years. Smaller school administrators directly connected the viability of their programs to an adequate supply of pre-service FCS teachers. They did not

[continued on page 14]



RETIRING? EHA OPTION

Is early retirement in your future? Would you like to retire with access to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska health insurance coverage until you become eligible for Medicare?

If the answer to both of those questions is "yes", then you need to be aware of certain conditions that must be met under the Educator's Health Alliance (EHA) Special Services program for retired school employees. The EHA has established these eligibility requirements.

1. The first requirement is participation in the program for five years prior to retirement. (There are special rules for employees and retirees from schools that more recently joined the EHA program.) This means that someone who was eligible for the EHA Blue Cross and Blue Shield plan prior to retirement, but chose not to participate is not eligible for

Special Services health insurance through the EHA plan.

2. At the time of retirement you must select the Direct Bill early retire option and not the available COBRA coverage. Individuals electing COBRA at early retirement and after 8-31-04, do not have the option of enrolling in this program at the end of COBRA coverage.

3. A minimum age of eligibility of 50 is required. Along with the eligibility requirements you must be a special services member in order to continue in the EHA plan.

The EHA plan for school employees covers more than 70,000 Nebraskans and is led by a 12 member board. The board includes six NSEA representatives and three representatives each from the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the Nebraska Association of School Boards.

For more details, go to the EHA web site www.educatorshealthalliance.org and click on "Retirement Info." 

Log on to
www.ncsa.org
for all information
relating to
Nebraska Council of School
Administrators



WANTED...

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS

NAHPERD, the Nebraska Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, seeks to recognize exceptional elementary, middle school and high school educators in the fields of health and physical education. Please consider nominating someone you know for these awards. Following nomination, there is an application process that the nominee needs to complete. Deadline for nominations is: March 31, 2006. Send nominations, including, name, school address, home address, phone numbers, grade level, and school of nominee to:

Debra Kaplan
Swanson Elementary School
8601 Harney
Omaha, NE 68114-4005
Work: (402) 390-6485
dkaplan@westside66.org

WANTED

Looking for a portable classroom, preferably in southeast Nebraska, reasonable proximity to Elmwood. Looking to use it as an artist studio and library.

If you know of or have one to dispose of, please call: Francis Belohlavy, (402) 472-7584 (w) or (402) 499-4998 (c), email; fvb@unl.edu

THEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

K-12 Superintendent - Principal Opening
The Board of Education of the Thedford School District is accepting applications for the position of K-12 Superintendent - Principal. Thedford is located in west central Nebraska, 65 miles north of North Platte. The District has an enrollment of approximately 110 students. Candidates must be able to communicate with and work effectively with community members, students, and staff. They must also have strong leadership skills and knowledge of school finance/budgeting in Nebraska.

Candidates interested in this position should send a letter of application, resume, credentials, transcripts, and five references to: Thedford Search, KALL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, P O Box 184, Milford NE 68405. For additional information contact Mike Cuning, 308-386-4512

29TH ANNUAL EDUCATOR'S EMPLOYMENT FAIR

Tuesday, March 21, 2006 - 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. -
Nebraskakan, Room 238 (UNK)

For more information visit www.unk.edu/edfair



POVERTY AS A FACTOR

(continued from page 2)

appropriate programs.

Due to limits on families in poverty, a key component for the Early Learning Academy is the Parent Resource Center. In Lexington, a certificated staff member and bi-lingual Para do home visits, working with parents regarding appropriate activities and the development of infants and toddlers. Additionally at the Resource Center, parents have access to the books and other educational materials they can take and use for all children. Parents will help if we help them out with tools and some assistance about what to do, and offer it in a friendly and supportive manner. In situations of significant numbers of immigrants or newcomers to our schools and culture, steps must be taken to learn about the cultures and differences in the perceptions about schools and teachers and what the role of parents should be in order to involve parents. Some, for example have been raised that teachers are not to be questioned and our concept of parent involvement is really foreign and seen as interference.

Traditional methods of communicating or traditional expectations for parents just do not work. The need however remains, so learning on our part about communication protocols that are effective with different cultures is critical to success.

Poverty also impacts older students in school. First of all due to the issues described earlier, they are already behind, and thus have not experienced much success. The differences in who is chosen for some of what we do in school and in classes, who has opportunities to do the fun things, who has the computers at home, who has been able to travel and experience things and so forth all take their toll on the ability to succeed and relate and therefore on self esteem and motivation.

Perhaps the biggest negative in my judgment is the resulting lack of a vision of the future and success. It is hard to envision college and some of the expectations many of us hold and nurture with our own kids when you grow up in the uncertainty created by situations of poverty. Kids learn early that they will be on their own, that the best they can

hope for is to get through or often just out of school to support themselves and both immediate and extended families. Talk and examples about sometime in the future and how school and this class all relate are just too far off. Keep Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid in mind. It takes tons of exposure and support to overcome this. Add to it the impact of not ever having the right clothes, nor the right car, not being able to talk about the ski trip, or be in the right social group, and you get the picture.

All in all, poverty is a factor to which we in education must respond. Our schools and our staffs generally come from middle class backgrounds, our institutions must, with increasing numbers in public school impacted by poverty, respond if we are to retain kids in school, and graduate the students in high numbers with the knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century. Our society needs them all and needs them all with skills and knowledge to succeed in a far more complicated workplace and society. 

MOMENTUM...

(continued from page 5)

school calendar. The number of individual districts and their innovations are too numerous to mention individually in this article.

There are also several networks of schools working collectively, creating a grassroots movement, to find solutions. The following describes three of these efforts:

On October 12-13, 2005, five Educational Service Units (1, 2, 7, 8, and 17) collaborated with local school districts, universities, and the Nebraska Department of Education to participate in a two-day conference to reflect on the various aspects of the high school and look at possible options for what it could be in the future. Teams from the 19 school districts involved have committed to a two-three year process to improve in areas that each has identified as priorities. They continue to meet on a regular basis to network, reflect, update each other on progress, and learn more about

the process. (Please see Bob Uhing's NSCA article, November 2005, for a full description of the project).

On November 30, and December 1, 2005, the Greater Nebraska Superintendents, in cooperation with NCSA, brought together a group of secondary principals and superintendents at Gallup University to review and reflect on the three core areas of NASSP's "Breaking Ranks II" and the three State Board concept statements. At this session they had a chance to hear from Commissioner of Education, Doug Christensen, Lt. Governor, Rick Sheehy, and the University of Nebraska President, J.B. Milliken. In addition, valuable time was devoted to discussion with colleagues on the implications for local school districts. At the end of the two days, plans were made for a follow-up meeting to expand the circle of conversation to include lead teachers, other administrators, and local school board members.

In the spirit of staff renewal, the NCSA provided a grant to the Nebraska State

Association of Secondary School Principals to establish a Professional Learning Communities Cohort. Coordinated by Grand Island Senior High School Principal Kent Mann, they met on January 18, 2006, to establish the goals and guidelines for the group. There are currently 12 districts that have made the commitment to create time for local study groups to learn from one another. Plans are underway to bring the entire group together this spring to share what they've learned with the broader group.

These are just a few of the great things that are happening out there. The momentum is building but much work remains to be done. The Department of Education is looking for other school districts interested in "Rethinking the High School." If you and your school district want to learn more about this topic or would like to be a part of a network please contact Donlynn Rice at the Nebraska Department of Education. (donlynn.rice@nde.ne.gov or 402-471-3240) 



CONGRATULATIONS TO...

☞ **Tammy Helflebower**, ESU 6, on obtaining her doctoral degree from UNL,

☞ **Toby Boss**, ESU 6, on obtaining his doctoral degree from UNL,

☞ **Vern Fisher**, Lincoln Public Schools on obtaining his doctoral degree from UNL,

☞ **Dan Endorf**, York Public Schools on obtaining his doctoral degree from UNL,

☞ **Phil Warrick**, Waverly Public Schools on obtaining his doctoral degree from UNL,

☞ **George Conrad**, Millard Public Schools named Superintendent Douglas County West Public Schools, effective July 1, 2006,

☞ **Stuart Simpson**, Alliance Public Schools, named Business Manager, North Platte Public Schools, effective February 1, 2006,

☞ **Kyle McGowan**, named Superintendent, Crete Public Schools,

☞ **Todd Chessmore**, Cass Lake, Minn, also was at Macy as Superintendent, named Superintendent, Lexington Public Schools,

☞ **Chuck Chevalier**, Auburn Public Schools, Superintendent, named Superintendent, South Sarpy #46.

☞ **Dan Hoelsing**, Superintendent, Laurel Concord, Coleridge, also named as Superintendent of Newcastle Public Schools,

☞ **Rod Ready**, Principal Wauneta-Palises Public School, named Principal Callaway Public Schools,

☞ **Randy Redinger**, ESU #9 Alternative Schools Principal, named 7-12 Principal, Dorchester Public Schools,

☞ **Shaina Green**, named Business Manager, Alliance Public Schools,

☞ **Steve Wilson**, Elementary Principal, Centura, who is serving on the National Association of Elementary Principals Legislative Task Force,

☞ Commissioner of Education, **Doug Christensen**, who is highlighted in the February issue of the *School Administrator*, published by the American Association of School Administrators

☞ **Kyle Finke**, teacher, Butler Creek Public Schools, named Elementary Principal,

☞ **Nancy Meyer**, named Director of

Student Services, ESU #6,

☞ **Amy Shane**, Interim Superintendent, O'Neill, named Superintendent,

☞ **Drew Harris**, Superintendent, Burton, Kansas, named Superintendent at Thayer Community Schools,

☞ **John Poppert**, Elementary Principal at Exeter-Milligan, named Elementary Principal at Giltner Public Schools

Retirements:

☞ **Chuck Hafer**, Superintendent, Mullen Public Schools,

☞ **Don Betterman**, Superintendent, Plainview Public Schools,

☞ **Jerry Williams**, Superintendent, Kimball Public Schools,

☞ **Gary Gustafson**, Superintendent, East Butler, Public Schools,

☞ **Larry Frost**, Superintendent, Walthill Public Schools,

☞ **Lee Hall**, Superintendent, Shelton Public Schools

☞ **Cheryl Blue**, Assistant Superintendent, Plattsmouth Public Schools,

☞ **Barry Ballou**, Assistant Superintendent, Hastings Public Schools,

☞ **Ann Trinkle**, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, Bellevue Public Schools,

☞ **John Crawford**, Executive Director of Evaluation & Planning, Millard Public Schools,

☞ **Tom Camp**, Elementary Principal, Kearney Public Schools,

☞ **Phil Koch**, Middle School Principal, Millard Public Schools,

☞ **Bob Sykes**, Elementary Principal, Crete Public Schools,

☞ **Rick Moses**, Middle School Principal, York Public Schools,

☞ **Gene Hobart**, Assistant Principal, Fremont Senior High School,

☞ **Dave Schrader**, High School Assistant Principal, Fremont Senior High School,

☞ **Barb McGee**, Staff Developer, ESU #13,

☞ **Don Seifried**, Principal Sargent High School,

☞ **Jim Flynn**, Elementary Principal, Louisville Public Schools,

☞ **Mick Patch**, Principal, Broken Bow Public Schools

UPCOMING EVENTS...

February 21-22
NAESP/NDE Joint Meeting & Legislative Breakfast
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

February 28
NAESP Legislative Conference
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

March 1
NSASSP Legislative Workshop
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

March 8
GRIT Conference
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

March 9
Student Wellness Workshop
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

March 14
Student Wellness Workshop
Holiday Inn - Kearney

March 27
Paraeducators Workshop
Holiday Inn - Kearney

April 11
Educational Office Personnel
Holiday Inn - Kearney

April 26-28
NASBO/NAESP State Convention
Holiday Inn Midtown - Grand Island

May 23
NARSA Event
Lincoln, NE

For more information on any of these conferences or to register online please visit www.ncsa.org

SYMPATHY

☞ **Dave Swartz**, retired member from Lincoln Public Schools, on death of his mother

☞ **Doug Nabb**, Fremont Public Schools on the death of his father

☞ **Norm Yoder**, Heartland Public Schools on the death of his mother

☞ Family of **William (Bill) Lewis**, Assistant Director, Nebraska School Activities Association, and past Elementary Principal at Ainsworth, 1979-1988



“JUST SAY YES” PEOPLE

(continued from page 1)

knockout,” “You REALLY do always put kids first,” and “PLEASE enjoy one of these Krispy Kreme Donuts while I explain my request to you.” Now that you know we know these are just tactics, who knows what might happen? The entire balance of the educational world might be up for grabs!

Admittedly, while not terribly funny, I hope you see the truth in how we interact with people affects the organization positively or negatively. Up to this point I have agreed with the view that business officials, inherently, just love to say no. Some superintendent types might even say that by our very nature we cannot even help ourselves from saying no. However, it is my proposition that, over the long-term, most business officials see their role as saying yes. Now pick yourselves off the floor and allow me to explain.

This “Just Say Yes” view of business officials is based upon a few overriding assumptions. First, this view assumes one major duty of the business official's position is to maximize the Districts' financial resources. Second, this view assumes that maximizing resources is necessary for the organization to be in a competitive position to carryout or accomplish its mission. Third, the local community via the board/superintendent will, over time, set goals and objectives that necessitate the adoption of the “Just Say Yes” mantra.

To further bring home my argument let's just admit up front that no business official has ever just said yes for yes sake. That is to say we do not “Just Say Yes” very easily. It takes time, effort, and determination to get the coveted “Yes” from a school business official. Furthermore, for some strange reason we tend to relate new spending as necessarily needing a direct link to the goals and objectives of the organization. Some might even say we are picky in this regard. In reality, however it is all about accountability in the financial sense.

Specifically, business officials are accountable for the resources and the financial progress towards achieving various stakeholders' goals and objectives. A balanced “Community Perspective” based upon the goals of the various goalsetters seems productive. This so-called “Community Perspective” seems strong from my view of the world. In a serious, for the moment, attempt to try and convince you of which I speak, let's look at the following goals:

1. **Board Goals**
 - a. *Maximize local, state, and federal resources*
 - b. *Maximize spending authority annually via additional 1%*
2. **District Goals**
 - a. *Implement all day every day Kindergarten district wide in one year*
 - b. *Develop national level professional development for all staff*
3. **Department Goals**
 - a. *Hire additional ELL staff based*

on enrollment and needs

b. Hire additional curricular coaches in math and reading

4. **Building Goals**

a. Replace and upgrade HVAC system in entire/section of building

b. Implement looping for early childhood (below age five) and Kindergarten

5. **Political Goals**

a. Integrate two socially and economically segregated buildings over time into one larger integrated school

b. Equalize sports programs at all middle schools

6. **Educational Goals (NCLB)**

a. Every child reading at grade level by first, second, or third grade

b. Highly qualified staff in every curricular area.

The above are all examples for purposes of effect. Moreover, all these goals are achievable over time with school business officials (and, by the way, a lot of other professionals) “Just Saying Yes.” While these goals might not apply to all school districts, they certainly illustrate my point. For that reason, in my opinion school business officials really are “Just Say Yes” people at heart. Remember, kids come first and at the end of the day people matter more than stuff. (If you were at the Labor Relations Conference in Kearney you know what I mean.)



THE ROLE OF PARENTS, TEACHERS OR SCHOOLS...

(continued from page 6)

much to school? We don't have anything at school that's worth that much to buy?

Why don't parents make kids go to school on a daily basis, be on time, and not make excuses for them when they're late, tardy, or absent? If we wanted to make our teachers upset, we came to school every day. I would hear teachers say, “Doesn't that kid ever get sick?” Whatever happened to pride in having perfect attendance? We might not have had a lot of things, but we did have perfect attendance. Now we have to send

out five-day letters, seven-day letters and ten-day letters telling parents their child has missed that many days and if they don't start showing up they're going to lose class credit. Don't you feel that kind of attendance will also run in to their jobs? If you're late or absent for school on a regular basis, won't you do the same thing on the job, until you get fired, that is?

So much has changed in the past five to ten years. As parents, teachers, and schools we need to get our children

back on track. Make our children see the need to be responsible for the things that they do. Help children to understand what is right or wrong, to be courteous, respectful, and function as intelligent concerned adults when they have children. We want students to leave our school with the leadership qualities and character to become model citizens.

Good Lord, another day is done now get us to another one. 



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FCS PROGRAMS

(continued from page 8)

believe that school boards in their communities would support continuation of programs with non-certified staff while waiting and searching for FCS endorsed teachers to replace those seeking retirement. Larger schools reported growing enrollments, but a concern that without teachers, programs could not continue this growth at their sites. Without growth, they could become tar-

gets for budget cuts. When discussing "what" should be in the FCS curriculum, it became evident that these administrators perceive the existing program formats to have no firm, clear curriculum base. A short discussion took place on the "appropriate program placement" of FCS programs. Should they be in the Social Sciences instead of the Vocational structure? Should they be integrated across all curriculum areas? All administrators agreed that money would be a deciding factor in the future of FCS pro-

grams. When budgets tighten, each and every program is scrutinized for essentiality, efficiency, and effectiveness. Without core subject status, FCS is dependent on administrative support in these discussions. Do administrators have the ammunition they need to ensure the future of these programs?



Calendar of Events

February

15	New Principals Workshop	9:00 a.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
15	NAESP Region I	2:00 p.m.	Thayer Central Intermediate	Hebron
15	NSASSP Region III	2:00 p.m.	Sports Denn	Norfolk
17	NAESP Region II	8:30 a.m.	South Sarpy	South Sarpy
21-22	NAESP/NDE Joint Mtg	11:30 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
22	NAESP Region II	5:30 p.m.	Gallup University	Omaha
24	NAESP Region III	12:00 noon	Sports Denn	Norfolk
27	NAESP Executive Board	9:30 a.m.	NCSA	Lincoln
27-28	NAESP Legislative Conference	1:00 p.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln

March

1	NASA Region V	10:00 a.m.	Chadron State College	Chadron
1	NSASSP Legislative Conference	10:00 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
8	GRIT Conference	8:00 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
8	NSASSP Region I	5:30 p.m.	TBD	Lincoln
9	School Wellness Workshop	9:00 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
14	School Wellness Workshop	9:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
15	NASA Region IV	10:00 a.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
16	NELI Think Tank	7:30 a.m.	Gallup University	Omaha
17	NAESP Region II	8:30 a.m.	Ralston	Ralston
27	Paraeducators Conference	8:30 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
29	NAESP Region V	10:00 a.m.	Western NE Comm. College	Sidney
29	NSASSP Region V	10:00 a.m.	Western NE Comm. College	Sidney
29	NASA Region III	9:00 a.m.	Wayne State College	Wayne
30	NAESP Region IV	12:00 noon	ESU #10	Kearney
31	NAESP Region III	12:00 noon	Sports Denn	Norfolk

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

- February 23-26, 2006 – AASA National Convention – San Diego, CA
- March 17-19, 2006 – NASSP National Convention – Reno, NV
- March 31 - April 4, 2006 – NAESP National Convention – San Antonio, TX
- April 6-9, 2006 – CASE/CEC National Convention – Salt Lake City, UT

The NAESP Link

*The State Association Newsletter for Elementary School Principals
February/March, 2006*



Early Childhood Education and All Day Kindergarten **Cathy Cafferty – Region IV President**

Hastings Public Schools was fortunate enough to begin offering all day kindergarten in the fall of 2005. We presently have all six elementary buildings providing all day kindergarten for all students. We have in the past several years had all day kindergarten for our at risk students in each building. There were approximately 10-12 students in each building that received Kindergarten Plus instruction for the last few years prior to the 2005-06 school year. The progress shown by students in the Kindergarten Plus program was one of the main contributing factors in implementing all day kindergarten for all students. Other factors that contributed to the decision by the school board were meeting the needs of families, state and federal requirements for student achievement, and providing the best opportunities and experiences for students to learn to read and write to avoid reading difficulties later in life.

A large percentage of children today attend preschool and daycare, so they become ready for all day kindergarten. If they do not receive the jumpstart of a preschool program the additional instructional time in all day kindergarten classes also allows teachers to provide literacy instruction and early intervention for student success. Much research has been done to show that early instruction in linguistic (phonological) skills and basic reading skills can be the best medicine for reading problems. Literacy instruction that focuses on talking and listening abilities, teaching about books and print, alphabet and the sounds of the spoken language, phonics, vocabulary, developing spelling and writing, and building comprehension takes more time than a half day kindergarten allows. These literacy skills can be true predictors of failure in reading and problems later in school if not met by the end of first grade.

All five year olds do not come to school with the same literacy experiences. All day kindergarten provides teachers the additional time to spend with students to prevent reading difficulties in young children. It is very difficult to give enough time to a young child in the developmentally appropriate program where children learn through playing, cooking, watching, listening, acting, reading, or pretend

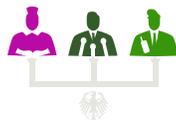
reading, and writing or pretend writing in half-day classrooms. Children do not learn at the same rate or in the same way. All day kindergarten additionally allows more flexibility and time for additional instruction in science, music, art, and P.E., which teachers may not otherwise have.

Administrators, teachers, and parents have been very pleased with the implementation of all day kindergarten and we hope that data collected in the future validates the decision to provide all day kindergarten for our students.

Region Notes

Region V

The eighth annual Fifth Grade Leadership Conference was held on October 25, 2005 at the Keith Co. Fair Grounds in Ogallala. One hundred sixty students from 21 schools attended the conference from the eastern half of Region V. The day consisted of mini-workshops about positive leadership skills for students presented by area educators, ESU #16 staff members, and local business men and women. The keynote speaker was Lory Capple from Representative Tom Osborne's office who addressed the use of drugs and their affect on being a positive leader. The students enjoyed a pizza for lunch and an afternoon line dancing activity instructed by April Cheney. Our winter Region V Principal's meeting was held at Valentino's in Ogallala on January 25, 2006. Presenters for this meeting were Kris Elmshaeuser from ESU #16 and Ranae Race from Banner Health Systems. Kris shared information about the changes in IDEA and the use of the 504. She received many questions from individuals and has already been invited to present again next year. Ranae addressed the need to take care of personal medical records. Her focus was the principal taking care of their personal health records so this information is easily transferred if they move to a new community. After lunch the elementary and secondary principals conducted business meetings. The elementary meeting included a review of our financial status which will allow us once again to offer the Aspiring Principal's Scholarship to those who are beginning their administrative program. The application is due March 15, 2006 and all Region V principals have received a copy of the application to share with potential candidates. Discussion was held on LB 114, the new vision testing that will be required in Nebraska and the School Wellness Policy that will be required by No Child Left Behind. We ended the meeting with nominations for Region V Elementary officers for the 06-07 school year. Elections will occur at our next meeting on March 29 in Sidney at Western Nebraska Community College.



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