

Making a difference...pass it on!

by Jon Habben, President, NASA, Superintendent, Falls City Public Schools



Habben

All of a sudden, I've noticed just how long I've been in education. Well, maybe not all of a sudden, but doesn't it feel that way sometimes? You begin talking to someone and experiences work their way into the conversation. Soon you are dating yourself in some fashion. And soon enough, you are either comfortable with that or not. Like each of you, I've found myself in those conversations often, in my case, countless times across 35 years in a variety of professional roles. That brings me to my point. What shines through in those conversations? Do you remember all of those administration class discussions

about communicating and receiving communication? Is it positive, negative, ho-hum, exciting, dreary, angry, resentful, nostalgic, proud, ashamed, wish-I-would-have, wish-I-wouldn't have, grateful, and on and on. Or does it even matter?

I submit that yes, the words that reflect our views and experiences matter greatly. They both reflect and shape our values about education in general and about our roles within the profession. Our words, even the subjects and context of our conversations, communicate to others who and what we are relative to our student-focused mission and the profession we have chosen. It is how we teach those coming into the profession about standards, expectations, manners and courtesies, integrity,

respect, work ethic, and the care that makes this a professional endeavor. We teach self-discipline, working with difficult persons, and resilience, lots of resilience. We guide, mentor, support, enrich, correct, discipline, and celebrate as new faces are emerging to take on the new tasks. And to demonstrate the importance of paying dues, learning from successes and mistakes, and putting in the due diligence, we model learning to demonstrate to others how important it is to be a learner. We hope that every day we have helped someone, even reminding ourselves, to be a little more professional on that life-long learning path toward being effective managers and leaders in our schools. We need to remind everyone that we don't want to act simply because we are being judged by everyone around us. Rather,

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Do "just a" Positions Exist in Your District?

by Alan Katzberg, Executive Director, NRCSA

Recently I discovered the battery for my cordless drill would not recharge. Not knowing whether the problem was the charger or the battery I took both back to the store where they were purchased to get help identifying the source of the problem. After waiting at the counter for quite some time and receiving no help I walked up and down the aisles looking for someone to help. When I finally found a young lady straightening shelves in the tool department I explained the problem. As I finished she matter-of-factly informed me she was "just a" sales person, couldn't help me and then she continued straightening the shelves. As you might guess, her response struck a nerve!

As I thought about this experience later, I remembered I had heard the "just a" term before. A teacher aide used it once when I was a superintendent. As many superintendents do at staff meetings each fall I was espousing "inspirational" words of wisdom, reviewing important procedural changes for the ensuing year, and challenging the staff in general. As I finished outlining expectations of employees for handling problems and concerns of parents and community members a teacher aide raised her hand and said, "I'm "just a" teacher aide. Do I need to be concerned with all this?" Without thinking I told her we didn't have any "just a" positions in this

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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.



Making a Difference...

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we want to act for what we believe are right reasons, right motives, and through sound processes, so that when judgments are made, we have put our best efforts out front.

So back to those words that keep moving from our brain into airspace. Some questions to consider might be: What do we sound like? What should we sound like? Is there a gap between the responsibility that we accept and the responsibility that we should accept? Can we recognize when we need to step it up? Can we recognize when we should, instead, listen? Do we understand resilience and how to make improvements and stay focused, or do we reflect only on harm done to us? Do we cause people to become supporters of the broader pictures of administration and public education. Or do we give people ammunition to take shots back at the

profession and public education?

My last experience with this was just a short time ago. I was part of a panel of education administrators brought into the Emerging Administrator's program at NCSA. Dr. Ernst and Dr. Dulaney were correct, we could have gone on for several days. There was so much that could have been said, so much that we would have liked to say, and so much more to listen to from everyone. But even in that short time, the words were important. They had meaning. They reflected history and experiences. They had been thought about and then thought about some more. The words were intended to be helpful, guiding, and to some degree were hopeful that listeners would use them to make a difference.

And there is the rub. Using what you learn to pursue making a difference. Always learning, always teaching, and always coaching yourself, those you work with, and of course, the emerging administrators.

Thanks, NCSA, for providing a forum for those with a little experience to reconnect. More importantly, thanks, NCSA, for providing those considering some form of education administration with one more learning opportunity along the way. Pass it on.



"just a" Positions...

(continued from page 1)

District. A short time later, however, I realized there were employees in the district who saw themselves as "just a" employees.

Do you have employees who feel they are "just a" custodian? "just a" teacher? "just a" secretary, "just a" _____ (fill in the blank)? It is very easy as a school administrator to get caught up dealing with all the immediate problems. The wise administrator, however, never neglects to acknowledge and show appreciation for the work and important contributions all employees make to the success of the organization.

Generally, we recognize the importance of having quality teachers in the classrooms and express appreciation for the role they play in the success of the organization. There are other employees who play important roles that contribute or detract from the success of the organization as well. Too often, these contributions go unnoticed until something goes wrong or is left undone.

There is no more important person in the organization than the bus driver when he/she is driving a bus load of students - on snow-packed roads! The para who works day after day with a student struggling to learn math facts can "make or break" a student's day. Custodians, cooks, secretaries, and others play equally important roles. These people are important team members and should be made to feel that way. In many cases they are our first-line public relations people in addition to their other responsibilities as well.

And about my drill, no I didn't get my problem with my drill solved. It will probably end up in the trash but I do have a new brand new drill...albeit a different brand from a different store. 

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Reconnecting Struggling Students

by Amy Romshek, Principal, Columbus High School



Romshek

Nebraska is somewhat unique in its approach to alternative programming for struggling students who are at risk of failing or dropping out of their traditional high schools. Unlike Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Texas, specific codes and regulations for establishing alternative schools in Nebraska do not exist. Nebraska's educational statute referred to as Rule 17 (Section 79-266, Nebraska Revised Statutes) states "school districts will provide alternatives for students expelled from school"; however, a clearly defined purpose, operating procedures, accountability measures, or funding requirements are not specified.

Most educators will freely admit that excluding troubled students through suspension and expulsion rarely proves effective. Rather, it displaces the problem on a temporary basis by moving the problem from the school to the community. More so, this practice is counterproductive, as it does not address the needs of students. A legal obligation remains to provide students, troubled or otherwise, with an education. With the rise of public awareness concerning the dropout rate in schools and its effect on society as a whole, the significance of facilitating school completion for all students is critical. For typical public high schools, the "at-risk" group is very diverse. It includes minority students, pregnant or parenting students, suspended or expelled students, addicted students, failing stu-

dents, and those students who have disengaged themselves from the traditional high school experience.

Thirty-plus years of research and evaluation has provided a consistent pattern of success indicators within alternative programs. Generally, these indicators fit into four categories (Aron, 2003; Cox et al., 1995; Wehlage, 1983): (a) an organizational structure that allows for small

and builds a sense of competence in students; and (d) school-linked services which include parental and community involvement and access to health, social, and counseling services.

How do alternative programs from Nebraska public high schools match up with the success indicators identified in the research? Results from a recent study including survey responses from

62 Nebraska school districts and case study interviews with seven lead educators indicated favorable alignment and practices. The focus for the study was examining typical high school programs designed for struggling students at risk of failing or dropping out of their traditional high schools. Particular programs studied were those provided by public school systems designed to help regular or special education students graduate or make progress toward graduation. These factors were examined:

Purpose - Purpose referred to reasons the program existed and how the school district addressed the needs of at-risk students within the

alternative program.

Quality Indicators - Quality indicators of effective alternative programs identified from the literature review were arranged into four categories, and

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size, program autonomy, flexibility, and a structured environment; (b) a school culture that allows voluntary participation, projects a sense of community, and establishes high academic and personal development accountability; (c) a curricular approach that focuses on individual learning styles, offers relevant activities,



Struggling Students

(continued from page 3)

used to determine the levels of program implementation.

- Organizational procedures—the established events and actions used to guide enrollment, placement, attendance and behavioral qualifications, ongoing evaluation, and day-to-day decision-making within the organization.

- School culture—the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors which characterize a school, including how people treat and feel about each other; the extent to which people feel included and appreciated, and the rituals and traditions reflecting collaboration and collegiality.

- Academic program—the instruction, delivery, and assessment of the curriculum, and the variety of relevant experiences provided in conjunction with the curriculum.

- Schoollinked services—the school and community services provided to students to assist with their academic futures and support their social, emotional, and healthful well-being.

Program Evaluation – The systematic evaluation that takes place within alternative programs included the identification of desired outcomes, data driven decision-making, and the dissemination of data to stakeholders.

Local Support – Support for the alternative programs was examined in two ways: 1) organizational support related to adequate staffing, resources, and facility; and 2) community support through the sharing of community resources and acceptance of students in the work force and community service projects.

As it is, alternative programming remains a viable option for helping at-risk students “get back on track” and for preventing high school dropouts. Overwhelmingly, school district participants agreed that earning credits and obtaining a high school diploma were the main purposes for their respective alternative programs. Additional findings and implications from this Nebraska study include:

1. Quality indicators are both unique and common due to the individual nature

of the alternative programs. A variety of circumstances affect this nature including location, funding, and the various needs of students. The unique qualities are important to the environment and the students being served. The common qualities are essential to the environment and should be components of all programs.

2. A key to alternative education is reconnecting the students to the learning environment. Changing the environment i.e., the location, the teachers, the size, the success factor, the expectations, and the delivery can successfully encourage this reconnection.

3. The student intake process is necessary to ensure that student, parent, and school officials in the program are in agreement with the procedures and expectations. Here, the groundwork is laid for students to see their entry into the program as a way to become successful in school, rather than just another intervention or punishment. The intake interview is needed to gain commitment from both the student and parent.

4. Career planning should be a significant component of the alternative program. The planning should include exploration of careers, work competency training, job placement, evaluation, and possibly college courses to make it a meaningful and relevant learning experience for students.

5. Data collection and analysis should be an on-going process utilized to improve both organization procedures and student learning. Progress data should be reported to stakeholders i.e., students, district staff, board members, and the community to promote understanding and acceptance of the alternative program.

6. School districts should encourage

and provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to collaborate about the purpose and progress of the alternative education program.

7. School districts should encourage and provide collaboration opportunities for staff members from both the alternative program and regular high school for the purpose of aligning curriculum and assessments with district requirements.

8. School districts should consider a public relations approach in an effort to increase awareness and acceptance of their alternative programs within the community.

9. For the most part, alternative programs in Nebraska function in an independent manner. Support in terms of funding and resources vary depending on the size of the school district. Some school districts pool resources to establish an alternative option within their regional area. At some point, a governing board should develop criteria and standards for guiding the operation of alternative programs to ensure equity, accountability, and visibility.

Overall, the perceptions of lead educators about their alternative programs and non-traditional students were both encouraging and compelling. In an age where some are quick to “play the blame game,” a convincing number of Nebraska teachers and principals of alternative programs are not blaming the students, or the parents, or the school district, or the community. Instead, they accept the realization that some students function better in a smaller, less competitive environment. And they embark upon the challenge of working with struggling students as an opportunity to reconnect students with positive learning experiences and the notion that education is the key to their futures. 

SYMPATHY

 **Roger Hammond**, Principal at Elba Public Schools on the death of his father

 **Rod Ready**, Principal at Callaway Public Schools on the death of his mother-in-law

 **Neal Stenberg**, Attorney at Harding and Shultz on the death of his mother

NCSA strives to keep current on all member changes, recognition and condolences. Please help us by notifying Carol at carol@ncsa.org



A Focus on Your NCSA Staff: Cami Cumblidge



Cumblidge

Cami is the newest member of the NCSA staff joining in November of 2007. Her role is to maintain and manage all of the accounting, human resource, and membership functions. Cami was born and raised in many central Nebraska towns starting in Kearney and graduating in Gibbon. Her qualifications include BS in Accounting and over ten years in Audit and Accounting experience spanning from Governmental to Public Accounting to Non-profit. Cami has also been on the NCSA audit while working for Grafton and Associates in prior years and is familiar with the organization.

She was stationed in San Diego in the US Navy as an aviation technician. She worked her way up the ranks from an E-1 to E-5 in four years. An E-5 is the equivalent of Mid-level management of enlisted members. She was one of the first women allowed on an aircraft carrier for a short 60-day deployment to bring the

ship from Florida to San Diego. She said it was exciting to experience the motion sickness as the carrier went around the tip of South America where the two oceans connect, get catapulted off of the carrier and then trapped back on which entitled her to a tail hook certificate (which caused another bout of motion sickness), and cross the Equator and get initiated (where she earned another certificate).

In the Navy is where she met her husband. Jeff is from a small farm town approximately 20 minutes outside of Pittsburgh. So she adopted his pro team of the Steelers and he has adopted her college team of none other than the Huskers. After she got out of the Navy Jeff and Cami spent a lot of time moving around trying to find a place to call home. They have been in Lincoln now for six years and think that it is perfect. She and has two beautiful girls ages 4 and 11 and keep her very busy.

She is very excited about getting to know the members and attending to their needs. 

UPCOMING EVENTS...

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

February 28
NSASSP Legislative Conference
Cornhusker Hotel — Lincoln

March 6 - GRIT Conference
Cornhusker Hotel — Lincoln

March 18
Leadership for School Athletic & Activity Programs Within the Law
Sandhills Convention Center
North Platte

March 19
Leadership for School Athletic & Activity Programs Within the Law
Cornhusker Hotel — Lincoln

March 25
The Nebraska Leadership Initiative
Holiday Inn — Kearney

March 27-28
NASES/NDE Joint Meeting
Holiday Inn — Lincoln

April 8-9
Managing Change — Balanced Leadership
Holiday Inn — Kearney

April 16-18
NASBO State Convention
Cornhusker Hotel — Lincoln

April 24-25
NASES Spring Conference
Mahoney State Park — Ashland

April 28
NE State Data Conference
Holiday Inn — Kearney

WELLNESS FOR ADMINISTRATORS!

The February NCSA Today includes an informational article related to wellness and healthful living for school administrators and the complete article can be viewed on the NCSA website at nca.org. under Administrator Wellness on the menu.

STRESS TIME!

The February article is entitled "Stress Relievers" and is provided by the American Institute for Stress. YOU WILL FIND SOME GREAT INFORMATION. CHECK IT OUT.

WANTED

 If you have a portable classroom facility for sale, please contact Steve Schneider, Superintendent at Auburn 402-274-4830



Response To Intervention Summit

by Mary Sheehy Yilk, Principal, Doniphan/Trumbull Elementary School



Sheehy Yilk

It was an honor to be able to represent the elementary principals of Nebraska at the first Response To Intervention Summit (RTI) in DC this last December.

I thought you might like a few thoughts about this summit and where it may be leading.

The RTI Summit was an event sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and chaired by the National Association of Elementary School Principals that brought together teams of educators and parents who were focused on improving the academic performance of all learners, including struggling learners. I am assuming most elementary principals in Nebraska are familiar or have heard about RTI but will give a simplistic definition just in case. RTI is a systematic process of screening all students for academic difficulty, implementing instruction/interventions that have evidence to support their effectiveness, monitoring student progress in these interventions, and applying more intense levels or "tiers" of interventions, as needed.

The RTI Summit was planned by the Office of Special Ed Programs (OSEP), the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) along with a planning committee of educational stakeholders.

The teams were comprised of a combination of key stakeholders mandated by the RTI summit organizers. Our team had nine members comprised of six job specific members from NDE (Reading First, Title I, etc.), one parent advocate, one NEA representative, and one NAESP representative and a facilitator from the U.S. Department of Education.

Getting ready for the summit, I

reflected about the first time I heard about RTI process, it was from my good friend John Street, Special Ed Director from Grand Island Public Schools. John has been a leader in our state educating

rather than hear from the stakeholders.

I then wrote to the State department to see who would be attending. OK, I did not personally know any of the NDE team members that would be representing our state. I did recognize many of their names from workshops and did respect their knowledge. It gave me a sense of relief that quality people from the state were going to be in attendance.

December 5th, the day I left for the summit was a history lesson in itself. President Bush was in Omaha and had just flown out of town, then the Von Maur shooting was occurring as I waited for the plane to leave. My thoughts of nervousness about the flight by myself or the summit left because my heart went to the families and people of Omaha. This gave me more strength to carry a message of meeting the need of all students. It so happened that the NDE staff were on the same flight to DC. We became acquainted very quickly.

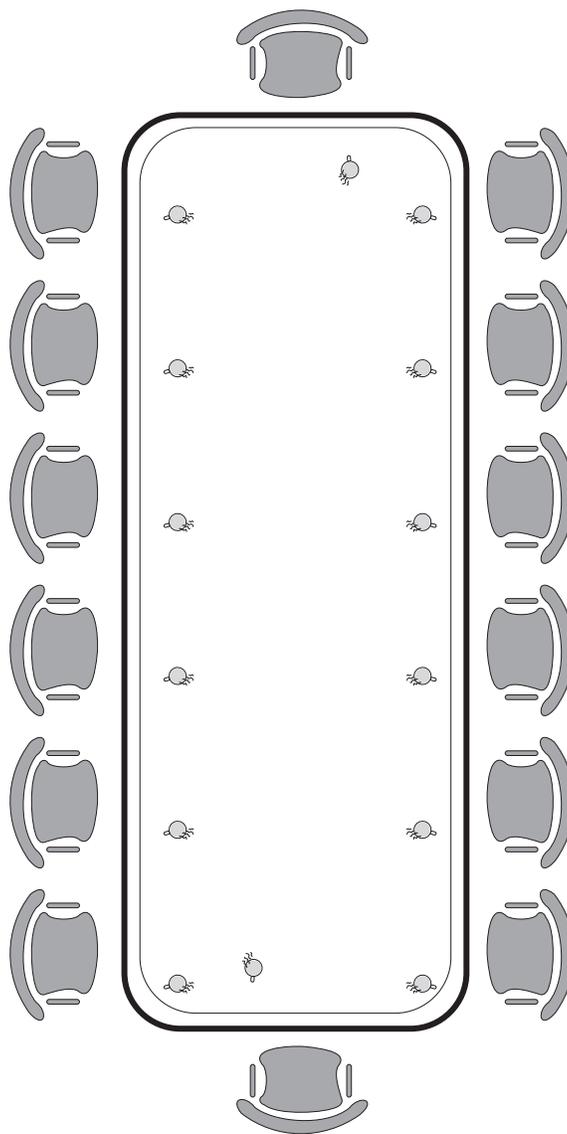
December 6th and 7th

As I registered for the meeting, I was told to go sit at the Nebraska table. The summit was going to be state driven on the specific needs of each state. There were 57 tables...even the territories of the US were in attendance to this mandated summit.

The U.S. Department of Education did not make mandates to the states. The U.S. Department of Ed recognized that each state is at a different place in the RTI process and the summit was to formalize a dialogue and continuation of growth of best practices. A RTI rubric was given to each state team to reflect and set goals for growth.

The Nebraska table of stakeholders at this summit all came with the intentions of developing the best educational opportunities for our students. As we discussed the RTI process, I was pleased

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many of us about the RTI process. I was sure that he would be attending the summit. I gave John a call to coordinate flight times but he did not fit the Federal criteria for the team membership and did not know about the summit. My eagerness of what I was going to be able to contribute began to falter. I started projecting that the federal government was going to tell us what we needed to do

Response to Intervention Summit

(continued from page 6)

antly surprised that the State had been working on a format already and that a RTI team had been meeting for about a year. The RTI team that had been meeting had some of the stakeholders in attendance at the summit and others that were not. Our team decided to listen/hear of what has been accomplished thus far and try to build on their vision. NDE has hired an RTI project manager to assist ESU's to develop RTI processes regionally. The RTI project manager will be working with several educational units this school year and then for the next several years other educational service units will participate until all ESUs have been involved. Having the ESUs disseminate the information of the RTI process to school districts is the plan for the communication and assurance that all school districts have the information and assistance that may be needed. It was discussed to expand the Nebraska RTI team to all of us serving on the federal team. It was felt that might bring consistency and not have two different teams and approaches.

From the information gathered, each district's RTI team will need to use the best practices for their students.

The Core Principles of RTI:

- Use all available resources to teach all students
- Use scientific, research-based interventions
- Monitor classroom performance
- Conduct universal screening/benchmarking
- Use multi-tier model of service delivery
- Make data-based decisions using a problem-solving/standard protocol
- Monitor progress frequently
- Fidelity

From the discussion, I understand at this time; the NDE will allow each school district to develop best practices such as CBM's and a tier system for the RTI process. There will not be any mandated initiatives that must be used as some states have done. The NDE and the state's RTI team will give guidance to school districts. Our state is currently focusing on reading/literacy at the pri-

mary level. As the RTI process growth occurs, so will more academic areas be addressed, such as math and then work at achieving a K-12 RTI process.

Even though RTI is a regular education function, the reauthorization of IDEIA (Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act) contained language of the RTI process. The federal RTI development team has hired many respected consultants to assist in getting the message of best practices of academic and behavioral skills communicated. Some of the respected educational researchers of best practices in attendance and speaking were George Sugai of University of Connecticut, Douglas and Lynn Fuchs of Vanderbilt University, and Donald Deshler of University of Kansas, plus many more.

Part of the summit day was hearing the experts discuss RTI and the impact it will have on education. The perception I had was that the regular educators and the special educators are now both discussing the best benefit for all students and for this to be the answer for improving education rather than the NCLB act.

NAESP President, Mary Kay Summers, did an outstanding job in presenting and describing what must be done to achieve the RTI process for all states. She felt that the RTI process will be revolutionary to education. She asked if all of us have the courage to do what is right for children. She would like to see in one year that there is a reduction in territorial positions, everyone be a leader (even the teacher), have a continuation of honest dialogue, and those in the field will bring a different dimension to the classroom.

Michael Johnson's promising advice from the literature on reform for all of us to reflect and react to.

- Focus on children and their learning
- Build relationships
- Engage in systemic thinking
- Use strategic thinking
- Build on assets
- Begin with a vision
- Identify shared values
- Recognize the Current Reality vs. Future Ideal

There will be practice changes advanced by RTI...

- Change in philosophy, attitudes and resources
- Encourages differentiated instruction
- Focus on the core instruction influences all teaching and learning
- Goals setting is grounded in benchmark and baseline data
- Expected trajectories track and help evaluate system performance
- Greater levels of interaction between schools and families

Some suggest that adopting an RTI approach will impact other issues:

- Aggregate performance of all students
- Increases in the performance of struggling learners
- Changes in the number of referral for special education
- Changes in the methods of exceptionality identification
- Reduction in the disproportionate representation of students from minority backgrounds in special education
- Increases in students pursuing enrichment and/or taking advanced placement courses
- Changes in secondary education following from the changes in elementary education.

The summit had so much positive energy and hope for public education and the learning for all children. It was a privilege to attend and serve the elementary principals of Nebraska. It was a true pleasure and honor to work with experts from our state and gratifying that all views were accepted. Our strength for the team came from the different experiences of the educational process. I know that some districts have already moved toward the RTI process and have an understanding of what is ahead for other districts.

I hope this recap gave you the information of what is currently happening at the federal and state level. 



Supplemental Insurance: A Solution That Works When Combined with Benefit Communication

by Mike Boden, National Insurance Services

School districts are no stranger to change. Many districts have experienced explosive transition in recent years with changing government regulations, increased pressure to reduce costs and rapid technological advances. Even the work force has changed. Today's employees are more diverse, better educated and more interested in making their own benefits decisions.

Supplemental insurance offers employers a way to control costs and meet employee needs. Although these may seem like contradictory goals, supplemental insurance — benefits that are offered at the worksite, but selected and paid for by employees — offer employers an easy way to achieve both.

Supplemental insurance benefits can help.

Supplemental insurance allows districts to offer an enhanced benefits package and gives employees the flexibility they want. In addition, supplemental insurance offers many advantages to employers, including a more attractive benefits package that can help them recruit and retain qualified, professional employees. When combined with the convenience of payroll-deducted premiums, supplemental insurance makes an exciting addition to an employee's existing benefits package.

Choose a supplemental insurance provider carefully.

When choosing a supplemental insurance carrier, employers should consider the following:

- A financially stable company.
- Communication of existing and new benefits.
- Multi-facility enrollment capabilities (if applicable).
- Prompt claims-paying record.
- Excellent service reputation.
- Payroll deduction of premiums.
- A broad portfolio of insurance products.

- Expertise in supplemental insurance.

Benefits communication is critical.

Although a good benefits package is critical to helping retain and attract quality employees, benefits are meaningless unless employees understand them. In fact, the average turnover rate of top-performing employees is 17 percent at companies that offer rich benefits programs but poorly communicate them to workers, as opposed to 12 percent at businesses with less comprehensive programs but better communication strategies. With reductions in human resources staffs during the past few years, this important element of a successful benefits plan has often been left undone.

Effective benefits communications has two integral phases: before the enrollment and during the enrollment. For each phase, your supplemental benefits partner should be able to deliver a wide range of services and capabilities.

Pre-Enrollment Communications

Custom Communications. A quality voluntary benefits provider can provide enrollment communications such as letters, fliers, PowerPoint presentations, brochures, e-mails, posters, tent cards — whatever works best to help employees learn the about the upcoming enrollment and the key details of the benefits offerings.

Group Meetings. To help provide background on the overall benefits program, highlight any major changes in the program and introduce any new offerings, the enrollment process should begin with a group employee meeting that covers key highlights of the benefits program.

Enrollment Communications Through One-on-One Sessions With a Benefits Professional

Advances in enrollment technology have made enrollments simpler and eas-

Advantages of Supplemental Insurance

Supplemental insurance — benefits that are available at the worksite and paid for and selected by employees — offer employers many advantages.

- *More comprehensive benefits program.*
- *Reduced pressure to increase employer-paid benefits.*
- *Benefits program that meets the individual needs of employees.*
- *Improved employee morale.*
- *More attractive benefits package that helps employers recruit and retain quality, professional employees.*

ier to administer; however, nothing can replace the value of having a trained benefits professional meet with employees individually to review and enroll their benefits. Two-way communications between a benefits professional and an employee is critical for effective benefits communications.

Using the latest enrollment technology, a benefits professional can help employees consider their personal benefits situation and see the impact of their benefits selections on their paycheck. Communication services can include:

- Helping employees verify and update basic employee data.
- Highlighting each employee's existing benefits, pointing out what the employee contributes and what the

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CONGRATULATIONS TO...

☞ **Richard Hasty**, Interim Superintendent at Plattsmouth Community Schools, who has been named Superintendent at Plattsmouth Community Schools

☞ **Beth Johnsen**, Principal at Elkhorn Valley Schools, who has been named Superintendent at Friend Public Schools

☞ **Jeff Edwards**, Superintendent, Logan View Public Schools, who has been named Superintendent at Nebraska City Public Schools

☞ **Paul Hull**, Principal Schuyler Grade School, who has been named Superintendent at Raymond Central Public Schools

☞ **Stan Hendricks**, Assistant Principal at Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca Schools, who has been named Superintendent at High Plains

☞ **Brian Redinger**, Principal at

Dorchester Public Schools, who has been named Superintendent

☞ **John Skretta**, High School Principal at Norris Public Schools, who has been named Assistant Superintendent

☞ **Dana Wiseman**, Principal at Sutton Public Schools, who has been named Superintendent

☞ **Shane Alexander**, Assistant Principal at Hall School in North Platte, who has been named Principal

☞ **Nancy Brosamle**, Elementary Principal at Bryant in Kearney, who has been named Elementary Principal at Millard Public Schools

☞ **Rod Foley**, Assistant Principal at Walnut Middle School in Grand Island, who has been named Principal

☞ **Brenda Petersen**, Assistant Principal, Schuyler Public Schools, who has been named Principal

Supplemental Insurance

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employer contributes.

- Reviewing the employee's benefits selections and how each affects the paycheck so the employee can see exactly what the deductions will be and, if pre-taxing, what the savings can be.

- Showing the employee his or her entire benefits package, including paid time off, uniform costs or any specific benefits you want to highlight. Again, the employee can see his or her own contributions to the benefits package, as well as what you contribute.

- Providing a detailed listing of the employee's selections and contributions as one last verification of plan information and premiums.

So what's the advantage of effective benefits communication? You'll save costs, time and energy — plus, you'll gain greater employee satisfaction through personal, quality benefits communication.

About the Author

Mike Boden is a Senior Sales Representative for National Insurance Services. Mike is responsible for marketing supplemental insurance for National Insurance Services in the Nebraska area along with Steve Ott and Kurt Genrich. Together, Mike, Steve and Kurt, each experts in their specialty, provide a team approach to school employee benefits, providing everything from Medical Insurance to Long-Term Disability Insurance.

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To reach Mike Boden or to inquire about school employee benefits, call 1.800.597.2341. 

RETIREMENTS...

Retiring this year? NCSA wants to know about you. Go to <http://ncsa.org/retired.htm> to complete the retirement profile. All retirees will be honored in the May edition of the NCSA Today.

☞ **Steve Coleman**, Assistant Superintendent, Papillion-LaVista Public Schools

☞ **Galen Boldt**, Assistant Superintendent, Norris Public Schools

☞ **Margene Dahlstedt**, Director of Finance, Kearney Public Schools

☞ **Katherine Meink**, Superintendent, KeyaPaha County High School

☞ **David Wade**, Superintendent, Rock County High School

☞ **Larry Sweley**, Superintendent, Cody-Kilgore Public Schools

☞ **Gary Oxley**, Superintendent, Raymond Central Schools

☞ **Paul Brochtrup**, Superintendent, North Platte Public Schools

☞ **Keith Rohwer**, Superintendent, Nebraska City Public Schools

☞ **Dennis Gray**, Superintendent, High Plains Community Schools

☞ **Don Pieper**, Superintendent, Dorchester Public Schools

☞ **Robert Tipton**, Superintendent, Superior High School

☞ **Larry Weaver**, Superintendent, Sutton Public Schools

☞ **Fred Williams**, Superintendent, Winnebago Public Schools

☞ **David Jones**, Superintendent, Oakland Craig Public Schools

☞ **Scott Maline**, Superintendent, Minden Public Schools

☞ **Gene Haddix**, Superintendent, North Loup Scotia Public Schools

☞ **Barry Stark**, Principal at Norris Middle School

☞ **Peggy Brendel**, Principal at Norris Elementary School - Millard Public Schools

☞ **Doug Moss**, Assistant Principal, Lakeview High School - Columbus

☞ **Charlotte Casson**, High Ability Learner Program Director, Kearney Public Schools

☞ **Tucker Lillis**, Superintendent, Ogallala Public Schools

☞ **Frank Hoefling**, Principal Eagle Elementary School



Transportation Rules

by Russ Inbody, Nebraska Department of Education



Inbody

The State Board of Education has approved changes to the rules regulating pupil transportation in Nebraska. Revisions to Rule 92—Minimum Equipment Standards and Safety Inspection Criteria for Pupil Transportation Vehicles were approved in September 2007. Revisions to Rule 91—Driver Qualifications and Operational Procedures for Pupil Transportation Vehicles were approved in December 2007.

Both Rules have been forwarded to the Attorney General's office for their review. If the Attorney General's office approves the Rules, they are forwarded to the Governor's office. If the Governor approves the Rules, they are filed with the Secretary of State and are effective five days later.

Along with technical and wording changes, the following changes were made to Rule 91.

- Sunset the use of modified 15-passenger vans by school districts three years after the implementation date of Rule 91;
- Require training for drivers of the modified 15-passenger vans until the sunset;
- Provides for an exemption from the training for some experienced drivers of the modified 15-passenger vans;
- Increase the length of training, (by one hour), for driver's of pupil transportation vehicles;
- Require schools to annually check drivers' driving record with the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles;
- Require schools to check drivers' State Patrol criminal records every five years;
- Require drivers to do a post-trip check for children remaining on the vehicle at the conclusion of each and every trip; and

- Revise bus speed limits to align with current State Statutes.

As is the case with Rule 91, along with technical and wording changes the following changes were made to Rule 92:

- Sunset the use of modified 15-passenger vans by school districts three years after the implementation date of Rules 91 and 92;
- Eliminates requiring the "School Student" signs on small vehicles; and
- Align the equipment standards with the 2005 National School Transportation Specifications and

vehicles such as Suburbans, mini-vans, 10-passenger vans and modified 12-passenger vans may still be used by schools even after the three-year period.

If school districts purchase new vans then the federal regulations come into place and the vehicle must meet the federal standards of a small vehicle. The federal standard for small vehicles is ten persons maximum, including the driver. So if a new vehicle is purchased it must be certified as a multi-purpose passenger vehicle or passenger car by the manufacturer or the dealer if it is to be used

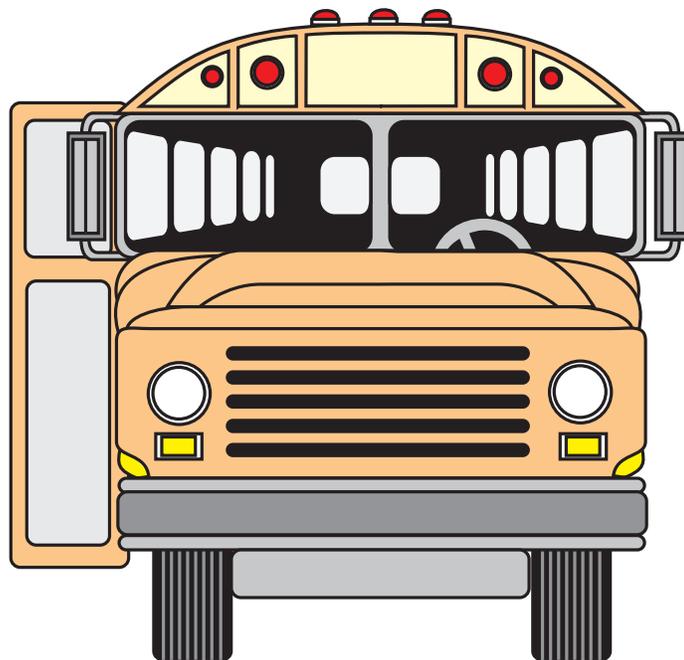
to transport school students. This would mean that the vehicle would have a maximum capacity of ten passengers, including the driver.

We have worked with the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles to ease the process for licensing pupil transportation drivers. If you have problems, issues or concerns about the licensing process, let us know and we will address the problem, issue or concern with the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles.

We also have visited with the Nebraska Safety Center concerning the driver training schedules and the additional time required for Level

I or Level II training. They are reviewing the curriculum and are looking at the best ways to deliver training so that it will fit the schedules of potential drivers and schools.

Rules 91 and 92 are detailed and are intended to improve the safety of the students transported in school vehicles. If you have any questions about these Rules or other transportation related issues, please feel free to contact Janice Eret by telephone at (402)471-2248 or by email at janice.eret@nde.ne.gov. You may also contact me at (402) 471-4320 or by email at russ.inbody@nde.ne.gov.



Procedures document

Both Rule 91 and Rule 92 have an implementation date of 90 days after the effective date. This gives all schools some time to comply with the new Rules. The implementation date is when the "clock starts ticking" on discontinuing the use of the modified 15-passenger vans within three years.

Keep in mind that the definition of small vehicle (which includes vans) in Rule 91 and Rule 92 is a vehicle that has a capacity of no more than ten passengers plus the driver. The only vans that no longer can be used by schools at the end of this three year period are the modified 15-passenger vans. Other small



Dulaney

Recognition

Dr. Mike Dulaney, Executive Director, NCSA
Dr. Dan Ernst, Associate Executive Director, NCSA



Ernst

In the November 2007 edition of the *NCSA Today*, we initiated a four-part overview of the blueprint of the strategic plan recently approved by the NCSA Executive Board. The strategic plan continues to evolve throughout the 2007-08 year with initiatives and specific components to continue and to be implemented over the next three years. The plan is formulated on the four areas of activity relevant to the purpose of a professional association (as shown below). In this edition of the *NCSA Today*, we intend to address the important subject of "Recognition" within a professional organization.

Recognition as described by NCSA refers to honoring members' accomplishments and highlighting noteworthy achievement. Employee recognition is the application of a scientifically confirmed behavioral psychology principle:

between customer satisfaction and improved financial performance. Although we are not concerned with improved financial performance in our world of education, we are most concerned about member satisfaction. Our members are our customers and we believe that when we provide an appropriate recognition program there is a link to both member satisfaction and performance.

Recognition is not just a nice thing to do for people. Recognition is a communication tool that reinforces and rewards important outcomes and accomplishments of our members. With the exception of longevity awards, NCSA and affiliate recognition awards are nominated and selected by peers. There can be no higher compliment as an educator than to be selected and honored by your peers. In part, when you recognize peo-

plings; looking to expand the awards program of the NCSA Council; and has a goal to initiate a scholarship program for prospective school administrators. School administrators across this state continue to do amazing work and accomplish much for their students, schools, and districts. We are aware of the many opportunities you take to recognize students and staff in your respective districts. Recognition is important for all and we wish to take this opportunity to salute each of you and commend you for the great work that you do in the name of students. Should you learn that a school administrator has gained recognition please take the time to send them a congratulatory note. Should you learn of an administrator that has gained recognition that NCSA may not be aware, please feel free to pass along the information to us so that we might include the recognition in the *NCSA Today*.

III. Recognition (e.g., honoring members' accomplishments, highlighting noteworthy achievement, etc.)

employee performance and retention are strongly linked to consistent, appropriate positive reinforcement of behaviors that promote the organization's goals. A recent study conducted by Northwestern University found there is a direct link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, and

ple effectively, you reinforce the actions and behaviors you most want to see people repeat. Recognition promotes the continued pursuit of excellence for all.

As part of our work within the structure of the strategic plan, NCSA is striving to promote a coordinated awards program for all NCSA affiliate associa-

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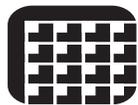
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Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY

12-13	NAESP Legislative Conference	9:30 a.m.	Champions Club	Lincoln
22	NASES Region II	9:00 a.m.	Ralston Public Schools	Ralston
22	NASES Region III	12:00 p.m.	Sports Denn	Norfolk
27	NAESP Region II	5:00 p.m.	Boyd & Charlies	Elkhorn
27	NSASSP Executive Board	5:00 p.m.	TBD	Lincoln
28	NSASSP Legislative Workshop		Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln

MARCH

5	NSASSP Region I	5:30 p.m.	Seward Country Club	Seward
6	GRIT Conference	8:30 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
13	NASES Region V	9:00 a.m.	Prairie Winds Com. Cent.	Bridgeport
14	NASES Region II	9:00 a.m.	Fremont Public Schools	Fremont
18	School Athletic Programs	8:30 a.m.	Sandhills Convention Cent	North Platte
19	School Athletic Programs	8:30 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
25	The NE Leadership Initiative	8:30 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
27	NASES Region IV	12:00 p.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
27	NAESP Region IV	12:00 p.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
27-28	NASES/NDE Joint Meeting	9:30 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Lincoln
28	NASES Region III	12:00 p.m.	Sports Denn	Norfolk

NATIONAL CONVENTION DATES

AASA - February 14-17, 2008 - Tampa, FL
 NASSP - February 22-24, 2008 - San Antonio, TX
 NAESP - April 4-8, 2008 - Nashville, TN