

SOME THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER!

by Dan E. Ernst, President, Nebraska Association of School Administrators; Superintendent, School District 145, Waverly



Ernst

This is a time of both challenge and opportunity for school leaders. Issues on the front burner at the state and local level include standards, accountability, assessments, financial woes of the state, expenditure lids, levy lids, and litigation with respect to the state funding formula. In addition at the Federal level, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was heralded by lawmakers as a watershed moment in the nation's efforts to improve its schools. The Act's goal, to "ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education," calls upon our nation's public schools to do something that, as U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige has noted, has never before been done "in the history of human civilization."

Many years ago, Abraham Lincoln said, "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." We in Nebraska schools have been and will continue to be responsible for providing quality education, now and in the future. I am confident that we will respond appropriately to the many challenges before us. We must continue to do what is important, not simply what is urgent. We will be accountable, accountable to students, parents, and to our schools.

The rhetoric on the aforementioned topics will continue. I wanted to use this opportunity to share information that may benefit administrators throughout

NASES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNERS



Garwood



Lipp

Rod Garwood, Administrator, ESU #1 and **Gerelda Lipp** were presented the annual Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors Distinguished Service Award on Thursday, September 25, in North Platte at the annual NASES Fall Conference. The NASES Award is presented to a Nebraska educator and a non-educator who supports Special Education. Recipients are nominated by NASES members.

Rod Garwood has served on the State Special Education Advisory Committee and CSPD Committee. ESU #1 is the lead agency in developing the computerized IEP and forming Project Para.

Rod was quoted as saying, "I did not earn this award, the employees of ESU #1 did."

Gerelda Lipp is active in her local church and a variety of other philanthropic causes. She works directly with a variety of children who have disabilities and provides respite care to their families.

Kraig Lofquist, Special Education Director of Wayne Community Schools, states: "She is an all around altruistic person who is an asset to our school and to the community of Wayne." 🙏

Nebraska. Throughout my tenure as a superintendent I have tried to enlighten new administrators with selected thoughts that might be helpful as they begin an administrative assignment with our district. The following entails a variety of practical and philosophical suggestions. Most, you have probably heard before in one way, shape, or form. Never the less, the purpose is to provide information that will allow school administrators to be successful.

The comments are not intended to be a cure all for administrators, but I do believe may be of value to anyone in school business. I can't take credit for the originality of many of these ideas. In part, many of the concepts come from a manuscript written by Paul B. Salmon. Salmon, a former executive director for AASA was killed in a plane crash in

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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.



WHAT'S UP WITH THE NEW "IDEA"?

by John Street, Director of Student Services, Grand Island Public Schools / CNSSP

IDEA...a thought, an opinion, a plan and, in the case of special education lingo, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Although still tied up in Congress at the time of this writing, it is anticipated that we can expect some "sweeping" changes in special education policy and practice through the next reauthorization. Special education practices have undergone considerable investigation since the original passage of PL 94-142 in 1975. Most recently, Rethinking Special Education for a New Century (May 2001) and the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education Report to Congress (October 2001) along with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, January 2002), collectively, will be the driving force of the new IDEA.

One major concern that has become

the focus of national attention is the dramatic increase in the number of students who are identified as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). This group accounts for over half of all students served through special education. It also represents approximately a 300% increase since 1976. Add to this group students in other mild disability categories, i.e. speech/language disorders, mild mental handicaps, and other health impaired (ADD/ADHD), the percentages go well over 80 percent of all students served through special education. However, SLD is the most frequently identified class of disabilities in public schools today. How best to identify and provide effective services to this group of students has become an issue of great debate.

There is a substantial body of

research that has been conducted on the effectiveness of special education. While no one research study encompasses all of the findings in a single document, problem-solving assessment methods, systematic progress monitoring and the use of general education interventions all have a solid basis in educational research as well as applied practice. In addition, the following four factors provide some explanation to the increase in the incidence of SLD:

1. The use of the IQ - Academic Discrepancy Model of identification is very vague and invalid;
2. Traditional approaches to reading in the early grades substantially underestimate the variability among children in their ability and preparation to learn how to read;
3. Given that remediation of learning difficulties is minimally effective after third grade, it behooves us to intervene early; and
4. Existing definition and accompanying requirements of IDEA works against the identification of children with SLD prior to the second or third grade, hence the "wait to fail" model.

Subsequently, states and school districts need to be prepared to operationalize a system that will be responsive to these factors. More specifically, special education needs to address the prevailing issues contained in the previously mentioned reports and NCLB:

- reduction of students in special education programs;
- changing the system from one of compliance to accountability; and
- early identification and prevention of students who are "at risk" of poor school performance.

Many of the current methods of identifying children with disabilities lack validity. As a result, a significant number of children are misidentified each year, while many others are not identified early enough or at all. The current model guiding special education focuses on waiting for a child to fail, not on early intervention to prevent failure. Reforms must move the system toward early identification and swift intervention, using scientifically based curriculum and instructional methods.

The problems associated with pre-
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P E R S P E C T I V E S

by Jerry Sellentin, Ph.D., Executive Director



Sellentin

AN INTERESTING TIME TO BE AN ADMINISTRATOR

A Chinese proverb gives thought as we recognize American Education Week November 16-22, 2003: "Want one year of prosperity, grow grain. Want ten years of prosperity, grow trees. Want one hundred years of prosperity, grow people."

The theme for American Education Week 2003 is "Great Public Schools for Every Child - America's Promise." I believe it's important to have a week to recognize the importance of public education. I also believe it's important to invite parents and community members into your schools during Education Week and during the entire school year. To really recognize student achievement one week is good, a year is better, but the best result is to "Stand up for Public Education" every hour, day, month, and year.

For school achievement to be successful I want to share with you information from a report by the National Conference of State Legislatures entitled, "The Role of School Leadership in Improving Student Achievement." School districts that have been most successful in improving student achievement have visionary superintendents who develop district policies that focus on both adult and student learning. "They recognize the need for effective staff development." "Ninety-nine percent of superintendents and ninety-seven percent of principals say that behind every great school is a great principal." The report highlighted the following changing role of school administrators:

1. Increased accountability. Recent legislation, including the federal No Child Left Behind Act has redefined the role of school administrators.

2. Students are different. Approximately, forty percent of public school students nationwide are children of color. In addition, special education needs demand an inordinate amount of

district financial and staff resources.

3. Management issues. Staffing vacant positions with talented educators is becoming increasingly more difficult.

4. Instructional responsibilities. School administrators are now more accountable for the academic performance of all their students.

5. State policies and unfunded mandates: Eighty-eight percent of superintendents and eighty-three percent of principals feel that policymakers are enacting more mandates but are not providing the requisite funding to implement them.

6. Time requirements of the job. The average elementary school principals works fifty four hours per week. High school principals reported working an average of sixty-two hours per week. In my opinion based on this report and other reports being a School Leader is not getting easier, but if we want prosperity/student achievement, it takes time, vision, perseverance, and a strong belief system over a long period of time. As Commissioner Doug Christensen says, "When you educate children today, you also educate their children."

Remember the Chinese proverb: you are growing prosperity for over 100 years.

I want to share with you some "Signs You Have Lived in Nebraska Too Long" I recently received from a friend:

- You take pride in knowing that on Saturdays, Memorial Stadium is the third largest city in the state.

- You think pheasants are the most beautiful bird in the world.

- You know that the statue on the dome of the state capital is actually sowing seed not bowling.

- You know what "knee high by the Fourth of July" refers to.

- You consider using your life savings to go to the Colorado-Nebraska football game.

- You think the "Red Sea" refers to the football stadium on Saturdays.

- You know the difference between field corn and sweet corn when they are still on the stalk.

- You can tell the difference between the smell of a skunk and the smell of a feed lot.

- You switch from "heat" to "A/C" in the same day. 🙄

"WOMEN OF VISION"

The Omaha YWCA sponsors an annual tribute to women, who are honored at the "Women of Vision" luncheon. The selection process begins in January with open nominations from throughout the community in eight categories: Arts/Humanities, Business/Entrepreneur, Communications, Education, Human Services/Community Advocate, Professional Volunteer, and Young Leader. Criteria for the award include residency, working or volunteering in the Greater Omaha Metropolitan Area; achievement and impact in the award category; involvement in community activities, and a demonstrated commitment to the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, creed, etc.

The 2003 Women of Vision Award in

the education category was Dr. Connie Eichhorn, Principal at Burke High School, one of seven Omaha Public Schools high schools. She has served as the Principal of the OPS Career Center, where OPS students take specialized career and technical education courses, as well as the program director for adult education. While administering adult education programs, Connie helped provide literacy, high school completion, and ESL classes for adult learners in a variety of locations and at times convenient to their work and personal schedules.

In the fall of 2001, she became the principal at Burke High School. Parents and staff praise her commitment to create a successful learning experience for

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ASSESSMENT IN SMALL NEBRASKA SCHOOLS

by Jerry D. Williams, Superintendent of Schools, Kimball Public Schools

If one does not realize it already, he or she better soon understand that student assessment is here to stay and will continue to have a major impact on teachers, administration, and students.

Like many small schools in the state of Nebraska, our school staff has been working very hard to meet all of the requirements of the Nebraska LEARNS standards thus also meeting the AYP goals, required as part of NCLB.

I believe that there are a number of keys to developing a successful assessment program and process. However, the number one key to appropriate assessment is the classroom teacher. Teachers do the lion's share of the work and should receive the lion's share of the credit for the success of the district's educational and assessment program.

It is extremely important to "sell" the teaching staff on the necessity of putting in the extra time and effort to work with all students to meet the assessment requirements and develop a successful portfolio.

Next, a very special key to implementing a successful assessment program is selecting the right individual to provide leadership to staff. In small schools, the ideal situation is to select one-of-their-own, a teacher. We have moved from a two-hours-a-day position to an approximately four-hour, halftime position of Assessment Coordinator. This person was a full-time classroom teacher and is now providing that leadership for our school district. This teacher still has four classes in the morning but he spends the afternoon working on assessment. I realize that this means a financial commitment, but I truly believe that assessment leadership requires a time commitment that most school administra-



tors do not have because of other responsibilities.


I personally believe that in a small school keeping the assessment leader in contact with the classroom as a part-time teacher as well as a part-time coordinator is critical. The challenges that are met by the individual teacher, the understandings and training needed are understood more readily if the person responsible for the overall assessment program is still in the classroom personally meeting those challenges. Although success cannot be easily obtained without the appropriate educational effort of teachers in the classroom, they need one of their own, who understands the challenges and has to also meet the assessment criteria within his/her classroom. Teachers are more convinced about what they have to do and how to do it correctly by someone who is also working at meeting the assessment requirements. This is especially true in the small school district when the achievement of a school's program is measured by the progress of one or two students rather than the bigger numbers found in larger schools.

To develop a successful assessment process, small school districts need to provide time for staff to work on curriculum and assessment. There are several ways of providing this time and each district must decide what will work for

them. In our district a monthly "early dismissal" for teachers in grades K-6 and dismissals of 7-12 staff by academic disciplines during the school year are utilized. The Assessment Coordinator provides some specific guidelines to all groups working on curriculum and assessment during these dismissal times. The coordinator participates in the development of the assessment training, in the bias reviews, assessment item sufficiency, reliability, and validity, which provides teachers the message that they are not alone in the assessment challenge.

Another additional key to meeting the needs in the small school district is collaboration with other schools and the area service unit. Our school district is working together with another district, Oshkosh/Garden County to provide the appropriate number of students necessary for meeting reliability needs. In addition, we work collaboratively with other schools within our ESU and inclusively across the state when using on-line student testing.

It is valuable to success that the staff receives the message that it is extremely important to do things the right way and preparing the district portfolio in the right manner gives the district the ability to communicate a successful process rather than a not-so-successful assessment process.

In conclusion, I again emphasize that the classroom teacher is the key to the door of assessment success. Administrators need to keep this in perspective when looking at the overall district philosophy and process. 

SYMPATHY

☞ Family of **Howard Martin**, Retired Principal, Ralston High School

☞ **Larry Lindquist**, Retired ESU 6 Administrator, on the death of his Mother

☞ **Ryan Lindquist**, Conestoga Elementary School Principal, Murray, on the death of his Grandmother

☞ **Tom Camp**, Principal, Meadowlark Elementary School, Kearney on the death of his Daughter

☞ **Richard Brommer**, Retired Superintendent, on the death of his Wife



NASB PRESIDENT SHARES REMARKS

by Ed Zimmer, President, Nebraska Association of School Boards;
Member, Lincoln Board of Education

Each year in September and early October, the Nebraska Association of School Boards conducts area membership meetings in nine locations around the state, from North Platte, Gering and Valentine (all in the first week of September) to Kearney, Norfolk, Fremont, York, Auburn, and Bellevue. School board members and administrators gather to exchange information and discuss current challenges. NASB's president traditionally addresses the assembled school board members and administrators after dinner, and this year the Association's president, Ed Zimmer of the Lincoln Board of Education, spoke at each meeting. The following is excerpted from Zimmer's remarks.

"We gather tonight after a beautiful day, but these are troubled times. The house of public education in Nebraska is rocked by litigation and talk of reorganization. We're challenged by growing mandates and increasing student needs. We have a tough economy and shrinking state aid.

"As Abe Lincoln cautioned us, a house divided against itself cannot stand. The house of education must not be divided. But what are we to do? My district, like yours, will first safeguard our students and taxpayers, especially when the adversarial process of litigation is upon us.

"But in such times, it becomes more important than ever that we keep the house of public education not just standing, but strong. More than a quarter of a million students are attending Nebraska public schools this fall, and by next June, another quarter of a million years of young lives will have been invested in our schools. We cannot afford a single bad year, not when it is multiplied into hundreds of thousands of kid years.

"So even as the lights go on in the Nebraska school finance courtroom, and the rhetoric heats up, those of us who serve our communities and our communities' children on school boards (or as administrators) must never stop working together in every possible arena, even if we must work separately in court.

"Associations like NASB (and NCSA), representing as they do the vast majority of Nebraska's public school students, must stand back from direct participation in litigation that might benefit some members at the expense of others. But we must redouble our efforts to bring all of our members and all of our friends throughout Nebraska together for a meaningful and productive dialogue to serve all students. It doesn't matter what you think the Nebraska Constitution requires—we all know that student needs, state and federal requirements, and resources are out of whack.

"In these troubled times, your leader-

ship is more important than ever. And by working together, we can create unique opportunities not available in calmer times, to guide our state to allow us to better educate all students through improvements in finance and organization."

NCSA EXECUTIVE BOARD SUMMARY

The NCSA Executive Board met on October 16 and discussed the following items:

- The Board accepted the auditors report for 2002-03 by Grafton & Associates.
- NCSA is in the second year of a two-year contract with Horace Mann to provide professional liability insurance to active NCSA members. Horace Mann will no longer be providing this coverage throughout the United States. The Board has instructed Jerry to explore different options for our members regarding this issue.
- Motion was made and passed to not participate in a proposed program offered by CoSAV to our membership.
- It was the consensus of the Board to include a place on the Board agenda to invite groups or individuals to the NCSA Executive Board meetings to discuss issues of concern.
- Reports were given by officers, affiliate presidents and staff.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

☞ **Columbus Public Schools** on the passage of their \$17.7 million bond issue

☞ **Thomas Hain**, Principal, Imperial Elementary School, on his school being named "State Champions" by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

☞ **Jerry Gloystein**, Principal, Windy Hills Elementary in Kearney, on his school being named "State Champions" by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

☞ **Dave Jones**, Superintendent, Oakland Craig Public Schools, who has been elected President-elect of the

Northeast Nebraska School Superintendents Association

☞ **Jay Bellar**, Superintendent, Battle Creek Public Schools, who has been elected President-elect of Nebraska Association of School Administrators Region III

☞ **Shirley Combs**, Paraeducator from Potter-Dix (spouse of Al Combs, Retired Superintendent) and **Arlan Rolfsen**, Paraeducator from Westside Community Schools on receiving the Paraeducator of the Year Award

☞ **Joe Higgins**, State Board of Education member on his recognition as

a Distinguished Alumni of University of Nebraska-Kearney

☞ **Robert Bruner**, Superintendent, Bennington Public Schools, on his retirement July 1, 2004

☞ **John McLane**, Superintendent, Ainsworth Public Schools, on his retirement July 1, 2004

☞ **LeRoy Cundall**, Superintendent, Bayard Public School, on his retirement July 1, 2004

☞ **Wayne Ferguson**, Superintendent, Morrill Public Schools, on his retirement July 1, 2004



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1985, just after his retirement. The comments have been pieced together over the years and truly are eclectic in nature. I think it is important that we learn from others. My experiences allow me to make these comments with examples from the real world and administrative ranks. Author Barry Lepatner once said, "Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment." I have experience and continue to work on good judgment!

I hope you find this information meaningful and that it will lead to positive professional discussions and considerations while working as an administrator. Remember, each of you were hired because you were the best person for the job.

Keep kids first in every decision you make. Kids are the reason we are here. We have chosen this profession out of a love for helping young people and our mission remains to help young people achieve success. We must constantly think about kids and the effects our decisions have on them and their ability to become successful.

Seek advice. Administrators that have all the answers generally don't even know the questions. Work to establish the rapport with fellow administrators and staff and create a network of peers that can be of assistance to you when new concerns and challenges arise. Don't be afraid to ask students their opinions regarding issues. They will be honest, open, and many times provide positive solutions.

Practice lead management, (management by being a leader), not boss management. Work with teachers, staff, students, and parents in a collegial relationship. It is through the empowerment of others that you will truly gain results and rewards. To be powerful, you must continuously give it away. It is important that we hire good people, give them direction, support, appropriate resources, and then get out of their way. I will be accessible to work with you to facilitate your growth as an administrator, and yet understand the importance of allowing you the opportunity to do your job.

Reinforce good behavior. Notice,

praise, and appreciation promote the likelihood that positive behaviors will be repeated. Celebrate success and model a positive attitude.

The law, know it well. Our school laws are derived from board policies, student handbooks, faculty handbooks, the negotiated agreement, and statute. You must be informed to the point that you avoid the big problems that could cost the district large sums of money. Seek input and allow others to help you identify what might be identified as "big" issues.

Try not to take things personally. In any administrative position you derive the luxury of receiving the blame for everything that could and does go wrong with students, teachers, parents, the general public, and at times the media. Develop a thick skin and accept the fact that personal attacks go with the territory.

Conflict is a component of the school business that may make us uncomfortable, create stress, but yet remains the necessary evil that we must overcome to grow as a leader of an organization. It is best to deal with conflict as soon as possible; make sure you have the correct and most accurate information; if you need more time to get the right information, take the time. Also remember that there are times when a cooling off period is necessary in order to achieve a positive outcome. Conflict does not mean confrontation. Deal with situations using tact and respect for all involved.

Document, Document, Document. You must create a system that allows you to record accurately the true accounts of many school related incidents, behaviors, and episodes. All communications should be dated, titled, and written in clear direct language. Remember the most powerful message is often written with short and direct words.

Speaking in Public. Whenever you are going to speak publicly to a group of teachers, students, or parents, prepare your comments ahead of time, and practice. Key elements to consider: Be thorough but brief, maintain focus on your major points, and repeat themes if necessary. Humor in good taste may be appropriate but we want people to view you as a professional administrator and

not a comedian out of work.

If you don't have the time to do it right, when will you find time to do it over? I will have high expectations for you and you will have high expectations for yourself, staff and students. Doing it right the first time is the only way to go! Let others know your expectations prior to being allowed to do something wrong or in a sub-standard manner. Turn in required reports on time with accuracy and quality.

Make sure you continuously allow students and staff to understand your expectations. If you are clear and consistent, I think everyone will work to meet or exceed your expectations. If you provide no direction as to what you expect, what you get will be considerably below what you desire.

Make no promises to anyone unless you can fulfill your commitment. A promise to work with and for a solution is fine. To promise to take care of a situation may leave you in a position that can only be perceived as not being good on your word. Be a good listener, patient and work to perceive and assess needs of staff and students.

Interaction and visibility among students and staff will generate the perceptions as to your effectiveness. Be active and amongst your school community and they shall look to you for leadership and guidance. Stay within the four walls of the office and the employees will come to you not of their own free will; but will come with problems and concerns for you to "fix". Your effectiveness will be determined in part by your ability to work with people.

Support the Superintendent, Board of Education, and fellow administrators. You will have the opportunity to provide input into the decision making process at many levels. After a decision is made, the decision must be supported in spirit and in fact. It is our responsibility to use the most accurate information in the decision making process. If and when information changes and it can be determined that a poor decision has been made, apologize, admit the wrong and implement the right decision.

Confidentiality remains a critical issue for the successful administrator. You must be able to determine what infor-

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NSDLAF+ NOTES #13

Several requests asking a repeat of "School Building Life Cycle Stages" have been received. Addressing the constant issue of the maintenance and renovation of school buildings remains a constant feature of district planning. In fact, there are various formulas used by architects to determine the relative merit of renovation or replacement. Creating words conveying to the public about what happens to a typical school facility over time is difficult at best. In a document, whose source has long been lost, the

effects of time have been categorized in a meaningful way. Repeating again the five phases in the life cycle of a typical school building may assist educational institutions to prepare an organized plan for the future.

School Building Life Cycle Stages

PHASE I, THE FIRST 20 YEARS. During this period, capital outlay is spent primarily on small improvements in heating, lighting and plumbing and in making changes brought about by education innovations, such as technology and the grouping of students.

PHASE II, THE PERIOD OF MECHANICAL REPLACEMENT, OCCURS BETWEEN AGES 20 AND 30. This period in

the life cycle of a building is characterized by a gradual increase in the required annual maintenance and by the more frequent replacement of worn-out



mechanical equipment.

PHASE III, THE PERIOD OF RAPID GROWTH IN GENERAL MAINTENANCE, LIES BETWEEN AGES 30 AND 40. By this time, most of the original mechanical equipment in the school has been replaced or is on

the verge of being overhauled. The roof and service systems may require repair or replacement. The brickwork needs repointing and lighting fixtures may need to be improved. A wide range of physical problems are beginning to demand more and more attention, first one and then another. Unfortunately, boards of education and school administrators often view these projects as isolated problems, instead of diagnosing them for what they really are—the aging process of the building.

PHASE IV, THE CLIMAX, OCCURS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 40 AND 50. This is the crucial period in the life of a school building. The process of deterioration seems to be accelerated the

effects become increasingly noticeable. Changes may have occurred in the community and in the educational process, but the building has, in all probability, remained the same. Indeed, at the half-century mark:

(a) The school may no longer be needed where it is located.

(b) The area around the school may have changed in character from residential to industrial or commercial.

(c) Its educational inadequacies may have become so serious that the school can no longer house a modern program of education.

PHASE V, THE PERIOD BEYOND 50 YEARS OF AGE. Schools that survive beyond sixty years are usually retired from service within the following twenty years. It is generally agreed among architects that the schools of tomorrow may have longer lives than those of yesterday. A great deal can be done technologically, and through design, to delay educational obsolescence and to inhibit structural deterioration.

Assistance in the investment of building funds and bond issue proceeds is a specialty available through participation in the Nebraska School District Liquid Fund (NSDLAF+).

For information on the benefits to your school district, educational service unit or community college from participation in NSDLAF, contact Cliff Dale, Vice President, Ambac Securities, Inc., 402-483-1678, or cdale@neb.rr.com.

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mation is and is not appropriate to share. When in doubt, seek advice. Appropriate confidentiality establishes trust and credibility.

Don't worry about making mistakes. I want administrators that are willing to take risks with the idea that the results will benefit kids. You will make mistakes, we all do. It is more important to try and fail, than fail to try.

Be honest, be honest, be honest.

Don't take yourself too seriously. Life is too short to worry about the things that we can't control. In the big picture

we remain very small fish in the big sea. Hope for the best and cope with the rest! Make sure you protect time for your family. You can't function successfully without the support of the home and family. Include them when you can, but continue to allow them to understand the nature of the profession. A sense of humor goes a long way in this business.

As you have noticed, these comments have not been numbered. When a numbering system is imposed we tend to view the components with a higher number to be of greater or higher importance. This is not the case with these comments. The concepts and ideas pre-

sented in this material and the hierarchy of importance may change on a daily basis. The key to success may lie within one's ability to juggle the many entities and complexities of the school business. Good luck.

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WHAT UP?...

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sent assessment practices, in particular the discrepancy model, presents a challenge for local school districts to develop other ways to identify students who require special education services. In addition to the eligibility issue, the requirements of early identification, swift intervention, and accountability makes the challenge that more complex. One promising practice that has a great deal of merit is the Response to Intervention Model (RIM). It has the ability to meet all of the legal requirements associated with special education as well as providing a process to meet the needs of students at the earliest stage possible. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to use resources to intervene early to address student concerns rather than waiting for them to meet eligibility criteria to get help?

The RIM is a problem-solving process that includes a systematic analysis of a student's behavior and/or academic difficulties and uses this analysis to provide the foundation for a planned, systematic set of interventions. These interventions are to be monitored and evaluated to determine effectiveness.


The problem-solving process can be delineated and specifically defined through a number of discrete activities that include four basic steps:

- Step 1. defining the problem,
- Step 2. developing the plan,
- Step 3. implementing the plan, and
- Step 4. evaluating the effectiveness of the plan.

The process of defining the problem(s), developing plans, implementing plans and evaluating the results on an ongoing basis will address student difficulties at the earliest time possible and at the very least provide the framework to make decisions based on the systematic and frequent analysis of data. It emphasizes assisting students as the primary focus and not one in which assessments are conducted for the purposes of meeting eligibility requirements for placement in special education services. The process is intended to be an integrated approach of assessment and services incorporating general education and special education efforts.

Unlike many Student Assistance Teams (SAT), participants in the RIM will vary according to the nature and severity of the problem. It becomes critical that personnel with the greatest level of expertise in the area of the presenting problem are used. Although the problem-solving team members will vary, the parent is a crucial member throughout the process. We also need to view assessments (from a special education perspective) differently. Assessments in the RIM are individualized and conducted

at multiple levels within the problem-solving process using collected data to make the necessary professional decisions about what interventions and resources are needed to assist students. A global battery or a standard set of tests will no longer be used as the basis for making unilateral decisions. The key is to link assessment to intervention(s).

It is quite evident that the national focus on special education has changed from one of compliance to that of accountability. The requirements of NCLB and the anticipated changes in IDEA will significantly change special education policy and practice. Local school districts will be required to meet federal and state regulations; the most significant of which will be related to early identification, the use of scientifically based interventions, and the use of a problem-solving model as the eligibility process for students who require special education services to meet their educational needs. The connection between these requirements is the Response to Intervention Model which will implement a data-driven, problem-solving, and decision-making process for the benefit of all students. 

"WOMEN OF VISION"

(continued from page 3)

every student, including those challenged by disabilities, and for attending an enormous variety of school events. The praise was made even more noteworthy because Connie was battling breast cancer, undergoing several surgeries and chemotherapy much of her first year at Burke. She has implemented programs to help students overcome barriers to success in high school, including classes for students who need to improve reading skills, and teams to help freshmen make the transition from middle to high school. She has worked to ensure Burke is an inclusive school, recruiting staff and welcoming students from diverse races and ethnic groups.

Dr. Eichhorn was honored at the Tribute to Women as a Woman of Vision during the YWCA sponsored luncheon on June 10, 2003 at the Holiday Inn Central. 

UPCOMING EVENTS...

NOVEMBER 10

Assistant Principals Conference
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln, NE

NOVEMBER 13-14

NASES/NDE Joint Meeting

NOVEMBER 17-19

Gates Training for Administrators Other Than Superintendents or Principals
ESU #7 - Columbus, NE

NOVEMBER 19

New Superintendents Meeting
Holiday Inn Central - Omaha, NE

NOVEMBER 19-21

NASA/NASB State Convention
Holiday Inn Central - Omaha, NE
For more information visit www.nebr-schoolboards.org

NOVEMBER 24

Sportsmanship Summit
Ogallala High School
For More Information contact: Nebraska Coaches Association at 402/434-5675

NOVEMBER 25

Sportsmanship Summit
Omaha Holiday Inn
For More Information contact: Nebraska Coaches Association at 402/434-5675

DECEMBER 2

Legislative Preview
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln, NE

DECEMBER 10

Emerging Superintendent Workshop
NCSA Offices - Lincoln, NE
For information and to register for any of the above events, please visit www.ncsa.org



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Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

5	NAESP Region III, 3:00 p.m., Lifelong Learning Center	Norfolk
7	NAESP Region I, 12:00 noon, Chances R	York
10	Assistant Principals Conference, 8:00 a.m., Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
11	NSASSP Region II, 5:30 p.m., German American Society	Omaha
12	NSASSP Region I, 5:30 p.m., Seward Country Club	Lincoln
12	NSASSP Region III, 2:00 p.m., ESU #8	Neligh
12	NASA Region V, 12:00 noon, Country Club	Alliance
13-14	NASES/NDE Joint Mtg., 1:00 p.m., TBD	Lincoln
17-19	Other Gates Training, 8:30 a.m., ESU #7	Columbus
19	NAESP Region II, 5:30 p.m., Champions Club	Omaha
19	New Superintendents Mtg., 2:00 p.m., Holiday Inn Central	Omaha
19-21	NASA/NASB State Convention, 8:00 a.m., Holiday Inn Central	Omaha
19	NASA Executive Board, 12:00 noon, Holiday Inn Central	Omaha
21	NASA General Membership Mtg., 9:00 a.m., Holiday Inn Central	Omaha

DECEMBER

2	Legislative Preview, 8:30 a.m., Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
4	NAESP Executive Board, 9:30 a.m., NCSA Offices	Lincoln
10	Emerging Superintendents, 9:00 a.m., NCSA Offices	Lincoln

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

February 19-22 - AASA National Convention - San Francisco
 February 27-March 1 - NASSP National Convention - Orlando
 April 16-20 - NAESP National Convention - San Francisco

HAPPY

THANKSGIVING

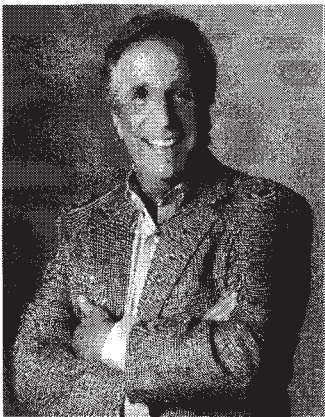
The NAESP Link

Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals' Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2003



**EXPLORE
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NAESP Convention & Exposition
San Francisco • April 18-20, 2004



*Explore the possibilities of the
General Session speakers.*

Henry Winkler is a recognizable Hollywood name. What many people don't know is Winkler's passion for helping children. In his session, he will share his stories of motivation and inspiration.



Region II on the Move By the Region II Advisory Board

Region II Elementary and Middle School Principals have an exciting and diverse year of activities planned. Region II includes all public and private schools in Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Washington, Gage, Dodge, Burt and Otoe counties.

We kicked off the school year on September 17 at Rick's Café and Boatyard on the new Lewis and Clark Landing with a dinner meeting and "Everything You Wanted to Know About NAESP..." program theme. New administrators were our guests as we welcomed them to our organization.

We hosted a Student Leadership Conference on October 20, at University of Nebraska in Omaha. Over 250 Student Council members from Region II schools participated in a day of leadership training. Keynote speakers included student leaders Jill Kruger from University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Justin Johns from Creighton University. In addition students had the opportunity to select from twelve break-out sessions covering a variety of leadership topics.

Region II members will honor our Central Office administrators and the NCSA Board members on January 21 at the Champions Club. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Nancy Edick from Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium.

In an effort to support and nurture future principals, we will be hosting a March 3 Jump Start Into the Principalship dinner at the Georgetown Club. The evening will include opportunities for aspiring principals to network with administrators from several Region II school districts while also learning more about the "Real World of the Principal."

On April 21 we will be honoring the people who make us look good...our secretaries! This social and fun evening will take place at the Olive Garden.

Our final meeting of the year is May 5 when we recognize this year's retirees at the new Upstream Brewing Company. This will be an opportunity for the Region II principals to celebrate the end of another successful school year.

Left to Right:
Marissa Westbrook,
Sarah Spellman,
Mrs. Christi Lebsack,
Katie Partch,
and Marin Hartfield
All From Mari Sandoz
Elementary,
Millard Public Schools



- - Dateline NAESP - -

What Do College Freshmen Know?

Across the nation, students are entering colleges and universities with their own perspectives on the times in which they live. For the sixth year, Beloit College has developed and distributed to its faculty and staff the Beloit College Mindset List. According to co-editor Tom McBride, Keefer Professor of the Humanities at the Wisconsin liberal arts college, the list helps to slow the rapid onset of "hardening of the references" in the classroom.

McBride notes: "These entering students were born into a world that had developed a screening test for AIDS and where managed healthcare was gaining its first foothold. The Middle East had replaced the USSR and Eastern Europe as our greatest challenge to security. It is a generation which believes in technological innovations and solutions, and where digital devices, PIN numbers, and calling cards are an integral part of their lives. Despite the fears associated with AIDS and divorce, we should remember that this is a generation that has grown up in a largely successful, prosperous society . . . I believe they are fascinated and vexed by the results of the world they have made."

In April 1985, Joseph Lelyveld complained in *The New York Times* that "conversations with some young people around the country about the war in Vietnam will find their impressions of it to be remarkably dim." High school juniors and seniors could not identify Ho Chi Minh, Robert McNamara, or the Chicago Seven.

In *The New Yorker* that same year, it was noted that "Each generation brings a clean slate into the world. But the world itself is not a clean slate, and what happened before needs to be learned and remembered."

Here are a few of the items on Beloit College's 2007 Mindset List:

* Ricky Nelson, Richard Burton, Samantha Smith, Laura Ashley, Orson Welles, Karen Ann Quinlan, Benigno Aquino, and the U.S. Football League have always been dead.

* Iraq has always been a problem.

* "Ctrl + Alt + Del" is as basic as "ABC."

* Bert and Ernie are old enough to be their parents.

* Garrison Keillor has always been live on public radio and Lawrence Welk has always been dead on public television.

* There has always been some association between fried eggs and your brain.

* Datsuns have never been made.

* Test tube babies are now having their own babies.

* Stores have always had scanners at the checkout.

* They have always been able to make phone calls from planes.

For the complete list, go to www.beloit.edu/.



Where States Stand on the Pledge



Thirty-two states require schools to provide time for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, according to a new report from the Education Commission of the States. The report delves a little more deeply into state policies and laws to uncover that seven states actually require students to recite the pledge.*

Although at least 10 states have a pledge to their state flag, only Texas requires its students to recite both the state and national pledges.

To read the complete report, go to www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/47/20/4720.doc.

Raising Rural Pay

"A highly qualified teacher in every classroom. Not too much to ask or expect." The Rural School and Community Trust's recent report, *The Competitive Disadvantage: Teacher Compensation in Rural America*, opens with a statement with which most people would agree.

But as author Lorna Jimerson quickly points out, "the bad news, especially for many rural schools, is that there are huge hurdles in implementing this vision." According to Jimerson, those hurdles mostly focus on salary. "Rural districts need to compete for well-qualified teacher candidates on three fronts," she says.

Those fronts are:

* Low overall teacher compensation. Teachers earn as much as 68 percent less than individuals in other professions.

* Teachers in rural states get less pay than those in more populated states. Teachers in the rural states—North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Wyoming, Mississippi, Iowa, and Arkansas—make less than those in more densely populated states.

* Rural teachers get less pay than their urban and suburban counterparts. Even within states, rural teachers receive less compensation than other teachers. In New York, for example, rural teachers make 16 percent less than teachers in non-rural areas.

The report goes on to outline what some states are doing to narrow the compensation gap and encourage teachers to head to rural schools. The complete report can be read and downloaded at www.ruraledu.org/docs/Teacher_Pay.pdf.