

HAVE YOU DONE YOUR PART TODAY?

by Mark Murphy, President, Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals; Principal, Centennial Elementary School



Murphy

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION, a term that elicits a myriad of thoughts and definitions from people. It strikes fear into the hearts of some and generates awe and respect from others. The spectrum of thoughts ranges from the comical; an overpaid bureaucrat who contributes nothing to the school program, to the realistic; a leader of the educational community who is out front as a vital key in providing opportunities to educate children. In spite of all the "interesting" publicity about quality and quantity of school administrators, the need for a sufficient number of good administrators has never been greater. Are each of us doing all that is necessary to ensure we have those people in the profession?

Nine years ago, about this time, I was sitting in my office reflecting back on the first days of school over which I presided as a brand new elementary principal. It had been an interesting and very educational first few weeks for me. To this day, I can remember the mixed feelings and doubts that went along with undertaking this new challenge. Never enough time, an overwhelming number of tasks, learning all the children's names, understanding the routine, evaluating the staff, being the final "say" and having ultimate responsibility, just to name a few. Pretty challenging stuff for a first timer!

At that time, like many new administrators before me, I revisited the reasons I took on this new level of responsibility. The thoughts of that time are as clear to me today as they were then. The number-one reason I began an administrative career came in the form of personal encouragement and attention

from an administrator who was active in the field. Ron Oswald saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. He personally encouraged me to pursue a degree in educational administration and offered me my first position. Without his support and confidence in me, I'm not sure which direction my career would have taken. Many of you probably have a similar story about your start in this profession. Each of us in NCSA has that same great opportunity to influence young, promising educators in our buildings and districts to consider administration as a career choice. Take the time, as part of your professional responsibility, to seek out and mentor someone who will help carry on the tremendous tradition of educational leaders in Nebraska and the NCSA.

Now, in my ninth year, I rely very heavily on the support system of people who have "been there and done that" in our ranks. The salvation of my professional sanity often comes in the form of some tremendously caring administrators. A phone call or an e-mail generally gets you what you need to gear up and go again. I'm sure each of you can say the same thing because every administrator in the state, has access to an administrator network in their area through active involvement in our professional organization. Whether you are a rookie administrator looking for assistance and support or an administrator who can offer that support after having traveled a few miles down the experience highway, you have a role in this organization.

As we move forward with yet another school year, we also look beyond into the next few years. What we see are tremendous challenges facing us. Limited and/or declining resources, additional mandates, greater needs,

declining administrator numbers and unforeseen changes is a short list that appears on the radar screen. In spite of those road blocks, viewing the future as an opportunity to do good things for children must remain the number one target for our organization and its members. I encourage all administrators to become actively involved in NCSA and your affiliate organization. Each affiliate provides wonderful opportunities both professionally and personally for all who choose to take part. As a group that leads the charge for positive change, we can influence the direction of education in Nebraska. To have the greatest impact on the future, we need to support our profession. Remember, any organization is only as effective as the members make it through their active involvement. Get out and get involved. Seek assistance, run for office, volunteer your time and talents or simply take part in the wide variety of workshops and meetings offered through NCSA.

The professional and personal rewards from involvement are tremendous, AND, the future of our role in education depends on it. 

INSIDE...

Small-Size Schools	2
Kinds of Schools We Need	4
Term Limits and the Nebraska Legislature	5
Nebraska Superintendent Turnover Slow	7
Meeting Accreditation Standards	8

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.



SMALL-SIZE SCHOOLS: RESEARCH ON VARIABLES AFFECTING STUDENTS

by Dr. Alberta Moore, Wausa Public School

FIFTY YEARS AGO

American children were being educated in about 117,000 school districts around the country, frequently in one-room schools. Today, the number of districts has dropped below 16,000, nearly an 87 percent decline during the same period that the U.S. population increased by nearly 70 percent.

Most professional educators viewed the consolidation of schools, achieved at the cost of protests by thousands of citizens served by small school districts in small districts, as a triumph for enlightened schooling. Larger schools created economies of scale that drove student costs down and, at the same time, gave students expanded access to specialized courses, libraries, and extensive extra-curricular activities.

In the past three decades, steadily mounting evidence indicated that children and adolescents do best in schools with well under 1,000 students. The new appreciation of small schools must seem like a revolution to educators and policy makers who have devoted careers to building large and modern schools throughout the United States and Canada.

Rural communities in North America are struggling to retain their small schools. State and provincial education agencies continue to close small schools and create larger ones for the sake of alleged cost efficiency and curricular breadth. The small schools literature began with the large-scale quantitative studies of the late 1980s and early 1990s that firmly established small

schools as more productive and effective than large ones. These studies, involving large numbers of students, schools, and districts, confirmed that students learn more and learn better in small schools. Students make more rapid progress toward graduation; students are more satisfied with small schools, and fewer of them drop out than from larger schools; and students behave better in smaller schools, causing fewer instances of both minor and serious infractions.

Quantitative studies have built an impressive case for smallness. There is an ongoing debate among schools and among students on "how big is small?" policy issues on governance and costs, and equity. It took the shootings at Columbine High School in 1999 to have Vice President Al Gore criticize the practice of sending students into overcrowded, factory-style high schools. Even former Education Secretary Richard Riley recommended to top officials to reduce the size of the nation's high schools because small schools are a powerful antidote to the sense of alienation that can lead to violence.

Many studies reported that large high school size impairs attendance and dampens enthusiasm for involvement in school activities. Large high schools have lower grade averages and standardized test scores coupled with higher dropout rates and more problems with violence, security, and drug abuse.

While it is true that large high schools offer more specialized programs for disadvantaged and disabled youth, students in these programs are more likely to feel left out from the school culture. In essence, social stratification is the norm in large high schools.

The education establishment is again discovering small schools. To the surprise of many, small schools seem to have some virtues. The new appreciation of small-size schooling is still a minority view. Critically important to a reassessment of small-size schooling is its affect on student achievement.

Since society changed, the prime of benefits of large urban high schools is diminished. Although school consolidation has a long history with positive benefits, they are temporary because the

(continued on page 10)

NCSA EXECUTIVE BOARD - 2002-2003

Chair Roger Breed

Vice Chair Roger Nyffeler

NASA Representatives:

President

Glen Beran

President-elect

Dan Ernst

Past President

Roger Breed

NASBO Representatives:

President

Barry Ballou

President-elect

Mark Shepard

Past President

Chris Nelson

NAESP Representatives:

President

Mark Murphy

President-elect

Scott Dodson

Past President

Roger Nyffeler

NSASSP Representatives:

President

Terry Haack

President-elect

Lynn Moeller

Past President

Barry Stark

NASES Representatives:

President

Robert Uhing

President-elect

Charlene Snyder

Past President

Kim Cooper

NARSA Representatives:

President

Stan Hale

President-elect

Dolores Rader

Past President

Ralph Thorpe

NCSA STAFF - 2001/2002

Executive Director Jerry L. Sellentin

Associate Director/Lobbyist Michael S. Dulaney

Financial/Membership Director Julie Anshasi

Training Development Director Kelly Coash Johnson

Executive Assistant Angie Carman

Administrative Assistant Beth Cook

The opinions expressed in this newsletter or by its authors do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators.

PERSPECTIVES

by Jerry Sellentin, Ph.D., Executive Director



Sellentin

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The 34th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward public schools is interesting, but one finding I believe is a "red" flag for the future. The poll stated the federal role in improving schools is welcomed by the public. Fifty-seven percent see the increased federal role with the passage of the "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLBA) as a good thing. Also the public shows no sign of alarm over the increased reliance on testing in grades three through eight. Sixty-eight percent of Americans would go beyond the requirements of the NCLBA and require all fifty states to use the same nationally standardized test to measure student achievement. Although not suggested by the NCLBA, sixty-six percent would go so far as to have a national curriculum. With the increased support of the feder-

al government what happens to local control? Is it possible we will see less local control or has it already started? In a recent meeting of thirteen state executive directors they were asked to list the major issue in their state. At the top of the list was implementation of *Leave No Child Behind* followed by tax credits-vouchers, equity in school financing, education reform, rural education funding and special education funding. Wasn't it a few years ago the talk was to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education?

Nearly three-fourths of poll respondents oppose reducing state spending for education as a means of dealing with the budget crises that many states face. Fifty-eight percent would increase state taxes to avoid such cuts, while seventy-eight would avoid cuts in education spending by making cuts in other areas. The major problem the public sees for local schools is lack of funding.

The good news is support for public schools remains high. Almost half of

Americans assign a grade of A or B to the public schools in their communities. What grade would your community give your schools?

OCTOBER 11, 2002

I would suggest you put red, white, and blue circles around October 11th on your school calendar. Last October, millions of students across our nation were able to actively express their patriotism and pride as they united in a synchronized Pledge of Allegiance. On October 11, 2002 there will be another Pledge Across America led by President Bush and Education Secretary, Rod Paige. President Bush has called on educators to unite American students and increase their understanding and appreciation for the foundations of our country, its values and to have a greater appreciation for American citizenship.

CHOOSE TO

Doris Jean Gill, President of the Texas Elementary School Principal Association wrote the following as a principal, I choose to make a difference;

Choose to love...rather than hate,
Choose to smile...rather than frown,
Choose to Build...rather than destroy,
Choose to persevere...rather than quit,
Choose to praise...rather than gossip,
Choose to heal...rather than wound,
Choose to forgive...rather than curse,
Choose to pray...rather than despair.

As a NCSA member you will be given the opportunity to choose to receive the NCSA TODAY by mail or to download from your computer. Watch for more details coming soon.

NSDLAF+ NOTES #4

Without exception school administrators and board members will be faced from time to time with demands of "local preference" on a variety of items. The occasion may be the local carpet salesman who objects to a bid from an adjoining town. It might be a local insurance agency protesting the district contract with a national firm. The local auto dealer may express concern about the use of "foreign" vehicles.

In any case the judgment of public employees must be based upon sound principles. Certainly price is important to both the education entity and the taxpayer. In many cases, however, the more intangible elements such as reliability,

longevity and safety may easily outweigh relative pricing differences.

From a service standpoint, the ease of use and internal efficiency may also be important. Staff time is valuable, and the gains developed from ease of access and automation may in turn result in more productive operations.

Public officials who consider all options and make recommendations based upon overall benefits need to be supported so that all parties to the process gain from professional choices.

Cliff Dale, Vice President, Ambac Securities, Inc. 402-483-1678
cdale@ambacsecurities.com

Mark Your Calendars – Administrators' Days 2003

July 30-August 1

Kearney Holiday Inn & Kearney Ramada Inn



FYI
You can now
download the
NCSA!
Please visit
www.ncsa.org



THE KIND OF SCHOOLS WE NEED

by Dr. Ron Joekel, Associate Professor Educational Administration-UNL, Executive Director Emeritus Phi Delta Kappa International

There has probably been no greater interest and concern about education in American schools than at the present time. Critics continue to “bomb away” at America’s schools, calling for reform because of a number of perceived educational ills that supposedly plague our schools to failure. We continually hear that we need to be more accountable, more competitive, and follow business practices in running our schools. With the fleecing of the public and fraudulent management of business, we don’t want to go there.

What seldom gets addressed in the rhetoric to reform schools is the vision of education that serves the ideal for both the practice of schooling and its outcomes. Aside from literacy and numeracy, what do we want to achieve? What are our aims? What is important? What kind of educational culture do we want our children to experience? In short, what kind of schools do we need? Instead, we have all kinds of solutions proposed running the gamut from mandating uniforms to improve students behavior to using vouchers to create a competitive climate to motivate educators to try harder! Critics also call for standards and monitoring procedures, for best methods that will guarantee student success. They want a testing program that will display the results, often in rank-order standings of all schools in the district or the state. There is a call for an assessment program that allows little space for personal judgment, at least when it comes to evaluation. Personal judgment is equated with subjectivity, and heaven forbid that. I am always reminded of Albert Einstein’s comment, “not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts!” To take it another step, Garrison Keillor talks about his beloved Lake Wobegone, “where all the children are above average!” Critics of the American Public School system continually communicate they want to reform schools so students are above average. Why, one Governor, pledging to improve education in his state went so

far as to announce that he wanted to improve education where 80 percent of the students in the state would be above the state average! WOW, how about that!

Instead of all the clamor for testing and more testing, I believe it is important to have a vision of education because without one, we have no way of knowing where we are headed or going. This leads to pet ideas that capture the attention of policy makers and those who have the solutions to the supposed ills of education. Do we really believe that more testing will improve teaching and learning or that uniforms will build character as some of our critics purport? I have grave doubts. Elliott Eisner, in an article published in the April 2002 issue of the Kappan magazine stated, “We need a conception of what good schools provide and what students and teachers do in them.” Eisner also called for developing a vision of the kind of schools we need. Following his lead, I would like to borrow from him and share my vision for what kind of schools we need and propose that we use them to assess the educational climate and culture of our schools. I will try to give the brief essence of each idea, but obviously there will be additional material that could be used to support my selection.

The kind of schools we need would have principals who are truly the instructional leader. Principals who would spend about one-third of their time in classrooms so they know firsthand what is going on. The “Model Schools Project” of NASSP as envisioned by J. Lloyd Trump back in the 1970s identified as a key concept the principal as an instructional leader, and the concept has stood the test of time in my opinion.

The kind of schools we need does not hold the ideal that all students get to the same place at the same time. Instead, they would put forth a concept that good schools increase the variance in student performance and at the same time escalate the mean. In other words, schools should increase individual differences, rather than to reduce them.

Does it serve democratic purposes to treat everybody identically or to expect every student to arrive at the same destination at the same time? Students need to follow where their aptitudes lie, where their interests are. Some need to go farther in one direction while others need to go farther in a different direction.

The kind of schools we need seriously believes that a child has a distinctive way of learning and creating and that it should be preserved and encouraged. As educators, we are not in the business of producing identical products like a car on the production line. Routine should not be our pattern and surprises are not being taken as a limitation but as a mark of creative work. In summary, we need to discover both who children are and what their capabilities are, and help them to reach their full potential. The venerable psychologist, Seymour Sarason, in his book titled, *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform*, [1990], said “The overarching aim of schooling should be to recognize, capitalize on, and exploit the obvious fact that children come to school already possessed of the major psychological attributes crucial to productive learning. They are thinkers and doers before they come to school. They are eager to remain thinkers and doers, to integrate new worlds into their old ones—an integration not separation. They already know that there is much they do not know and are eager to learn.” In Sarason’s opinion, “The aim of education is not simply to keep students in school and to graduate them. Should not our aim be to judge whatever we do for children in our schools by the criterion of how we are fostering the desire to continue to learn about self, others, and the world?”

The kind of schools we need would recognize that different forms of representation develop different forms of thinking, convey different kinds of meaning, and make possible different qualities of life. Literacy should not be restricted to decoding text and number. Usually the term literacy refers to the ability to read, and numeracy, the ability to compute. But literacy goes beyond the ability to read, it also in my opinion, means that it refers to the process of encoding and

(continued on page 9)



TERM LIMITS AND THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE: THE DE-INSTITUTIONALIZING EFFECTS

by Michael Dulaney, NCSA Associate Executive Director

Prior to leaving office after fourteen years as a Nebraska lawmaker, former Speaker Doug Kristensen urged legislative staff members to immediately begin compiling a record of issues and procedures. His concern relates to the potential loss of institutional memory, perhaps one of the most important yet intangible elements of the legislative process. His anxiety is shared by other past and present lawmakers in light of a national movement to impose term limits on state legislators, a movement that spread to Nebraska just a few years ago.

In 2000, the Nebraska voters approved an initiative measure to place a constitutional limit of two consecutive four-year terms on state lawmakers. The outcome of this particular ballot issue, in this particular state, represents a mystery to both political scientists and veteran lawmakers alike. Whatever fanned the flames for the movement in this state may not be known, but it certainly was not the media as some might rush to judge. The Lincoln Journal, Omaha World-Herald, and many other local newspapers strongly urged voters to say "no" to term limits and "yes" to the preservation of the election process.

Proponents argue that term limits will put an end to the career politician, weaken the tie between legislators and special interests, and erode the relationship between lawmakers and political parties. These contentions may or may not be true in other states, but they are particularly difficult to understand in relation to the nation's only nonpartisan unicameral legislature. A legislature wherein lawmakers take pride in their independence of mind and action on policy issues.

Dr. Robert Sittig, a political scientist and leading authority on the Nebraska Legislature, is an outspoken critic of term limits and did what he could in 2000 to make voters aware of the inherent problems. Sittig emphasized that, under term limits, turnover in the Legislature will be a constant problem with future legislative bodies composed

of half "newcomers" and half "lame ducks."

The result, as anticipated by veteran lawmaker Dianna Schimek, will be a legislative climate that is "less cooperative, more competitive." Her concern appears to be supported by national studies that predict term limits will "induce rapid turnover" and "reduce cooperation" among fellow lawmakers and also between legislators and their constituents.

Other studies suggest that term limits compress the window of time for legislators to complete their individual agendas, which brings about a sense of urgency within the legislative process. This sense of urgency, one may argue, is contrary to the general nature of the policy-making process, which is intentionally designed to be a very slow, deliberative, and cumbersome effort. The concern, therefore, is that term limits might "rush" the process and foster a less than patient atmosphere for discussions on major policy decisions.

Dr. Alan Rosenthal (Rutgers University) describes term limits as a "major de-institutionalizing force" in state legislatures. Under term limits, new members will have their own objectives to accomplish, very little time to accomplish them, and even less time to oversee their implementation. Dr. Bruce Cain (University of California-Berkeley) states that term limits "discount experience" while society generally recognizes experience as an important element in other professions. Term limits, he writes, "ignore the need for enlightened and experienced management of public policy."

Term limits may also unravel the relationship between politicians and their constituencies, particularly when the lawmaker knows a second re-election bid is not an available option. Dr. John Carey (Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri) contends that legislators "not bound to their current constituents through a reelection constraint will alter their behavior to appeal to those who

control their post-assembly prospects."

In the history of Nebraska politics there was perhaps no better example of a representative-constituency relationship than that of Senator Jerome Warner and the 25th Legislative District. Senator Warner served the same district in the Nebraska Legislature for 34 years before his death in 1997. Senator Warner's biographer, Charlyne Berens, described the senator's opposition to term limits, and his belief that it takes a legislator at least four years (one term) to "get oriented if you're really going to be active."

Warner also expressed concern for the loss of "institutional memory," that vital yet intangible factor mentioned earlier. Institutional memory, in this case, relates to the collective knowledge of a legislative body with regard to major policy decisions, including school finance, welfare reform, tax policy, etc. Term limits will undoubtedly have an impact on policy decisions due to an insufficient veteran contingent to relate policy history to the newcomers. The "why, how, and when" will often be a missing element in the debates that will shape future policy. Some believe this will actually benefit rather than curtail the influence of special interests on the outcome of policy decisions.

Naturally, we will not know for sure what impact term limits will have on future policy, or the Nebraska political landscape in general, until sometime after the new constitutional provision takes effect. We do know that, by 2006, term limits, rather than the electoral process, will be the cause for a major turnover in the Nebraska Legislature. We know that veteran lawmakers are concerned for the future of the institution in which they serve. And we know that at some point in time, our electoral tradition of re-electing those who should be rewarded with re-election will change, perhaps forever. 



CONGRATULATIONS TO...

☞ **Jay Beller**, Superintendent of Battle Creek Public Schools, who has been appointed by Governor Johanns to the Professional Practices Commission

☞ **Terry Haack**, Principal of Elkhorn Sr High School, who has been appointed to Nebraska Information Technology Commission

☞ **Ken Rippe**, University of Nebraska-Omaha, who has been appointed Interim Chair of UNO Department of Ed. Administration

☞ **Alberta "Bert" Moore**, Superintendent of Wausa Public Schools, on her marriage to Dale Steffen

☞ **Omaha Westside Community Schools** on passage of their over-ride vote

☞ **Mullin Public Schools** on successful passage of their \$435,000 bond

☞ **Sutherland Public Schools** on successful passage of their \$3,465,000 school bond

☞ **New Administrators for the 2002-03 School year** who were not listed in the September 2002 NCSA TODAY insert:

☞ **Sally Carlson**, 7-12 Principal at Polk-Hordville

☞ **Daren Hatch**, 7-12 Principal at Arapahoe

☞ **Kris Newcomb**, Elementary Principal at Howard Elementary in Grand Island

☞ **Toni Palmer**, Elementary Principal at Shoemaker Elementary in Grand Island

☞ **Russ Baker**, 7-12 Principal at Palmer

☞ **Steve Schrad**, K-12 Principal at Eustis-Farnam

☞ **Clete Arasmith**, K-12 Principal at Rising City

☞ **Ann Auten**, Elementary Principal at Watson Elementary in Hastings

☞ **Larry Jess** and **Tom Sandberg**, who have been names co-superinten-

dents of the newly merged Wilcox and Hildreth district

UPCOMING EVENTS...

OCTOBER 7

Reduction In Force - Harding Schultz & Downs
 ESU #13 - Scottsbluff
 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 For more information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

OCTOBER 8

Reduction In Force - Harding Schultz & Downs
 Holiday Inn Midtown - Grand Island
 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 For more information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

OCTOBER 11

Reduction In Force - Harding Schultz & Downs
 Lifelong Learning Center - Norfolk
 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 For more Information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

OCTOBER 19

All Principals Golf Tournament
 Meadowlark Golf Course - Kearney
 1:00 p.m.
 For more information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

OCTOBER 20-21

All Principal Conference
 Holiday Inn - Kearney

Sunday - October 20th

Keynote speaker - Erik Wahl
 Presidents Dinner

Monday - October 21st

Breakfast Buffet
 Keynote speaker - Roger Welch
 For more information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

OCTOBER 25

Paraeducators' Conference
 Ramada Inn - Kearney
 8:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 For more information contact Kelly
kelly@ncsa.org

OCTOBER 30

Superintendent Leadership
 Gallup - Lincoln
 8:00 a.m.
 For more information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

NOVEMBER 14-15

NASES/NDE Joint Meeting
 Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln
 For more information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

NOVEMBER 18

Assistant Principals Conference
 Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln
 For more information contact Angie
angie@ncsa.org

Please be sure to visit www.ncsa.org to register on-line!

SYMPATHIES TO:

☞ **Luis Cass**, Principal at Sutton Public Schools, on the death of his wife

☞ **Jerry Wilkes**, Principal at Southwest High School in Lincoln, on the death of his mother

☞ The family of **Gary Fisher**, Superintendent at Crawford Public Schools, on his death

NSASSP LONGEVITY AWARDS

25 YEARS

Lonnie Bernth
 Bill Bucher
 Rick Williams

15 YEARS

Duane Backstrom
 Tom Millsap
 Gerry Reinsch
 Stan Turner

To be eligible, a member had to complete 15, 20, 25 or 30 years during the current term and had to be a continuous member of NASSP and NSASSP. If you feel that we have missed someone in our process, please feel free to contact Kelly at NCSA (kelly@ncsa.org) or 800/793-6272.



NEBRASKA SUPERINTENDENT TURNOVER SLOWS

by James E. Ossian, Professor, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Given the spate of retirements in the past two years, it should be no surprise that the number of Nebraska school districts with new superintendents for Fall 2002 has tapered off. The 31 changes is the lowest number recorded in the 24 years that I have tracked superintendent turnover in the state's public schools that include high schools. The yearly average turnover for 24 years is 42.

Because of fewer changes, median years of tenure in position increased from 3.35 years to 3.60 years over last fall, and average tenure in position increased from 4.93 years to 5.99 years. Of the 29 individuals involved in the 31 changes, 21 retired, five moved to another superintendency, two are employed in other education-related work, and one lost a position because of a district merger.

To begin Fall 2002, there are 254 individual superintendents who are serving 265 public school districts. Sixteen of the new superintendents are assuming the top leadership position for the first time; 118 of 265 (44.5%) school districts have a superintendent with three years or less tenure on the job, including the 2002-03 school year. Unlike the past two years, anecdotal reports indicate that only a handful of superintendents have publicly announced their intentions to retire at the end of the current school year.

The Veterans

The number of individuals serving as a superintendent for 20 or more years in the same school district averaged 23 from 1987 to 1996, with a high of 28 in 1991. This elite group has shrunk to nine in each of the past two years. This year's old vets include: Russ Hoppner, Hampton (32); Dick Chochon, Palmer (28); Benje Hookstra, Spalding (25); Randall Anderson, Crofton and Glen Beran, Imperial (24); Leroy Cundall, Bayard (23); Keith Fagot, Loomis (22); Ed Briscoe, Shickley (21); and Mike Cuning, Sutherland (20).

Only eight Nebraska districts with

1,000 or over enrollment have superintendents who have been at their post for 10 or more years. They include: Dale DeRiese, Holdrege (19); Phil Schoo, Lincoln (18); Marshall Adams, Seward (13); Roger Breed, Elkhorn (12); Ken Bird, Omaha Westside and Randy Nelson, Norfolk (11); and Harlan Metschke, Papillion-LaVista and Keith Rohwer, Nebraska City (10).

Women Superintendents

At the close of WW I in 1918, when 4,800,000 U.S. service men were returning home and when 86% of the national teaching force were women, Nebraska had 218 of 507 (43%) public school districts, with at least grade 10, that were headed by females. Most likely, this was an all-time high for women superintendents in Nebraska. In 1950-51, during the Korean War, there were 14 Nebraska female superintendents; the highest number during the second half of the 20th Century.

This fall 12 of Nebraska's 254 superintendents, in districts with high schools, are women, one more than a year ago. The 4.5% falls short of the national average, which is estimated between 10 and 12%, but the modest increase is encouraging. Women superintendents at the start of the 2002-03 school year include: Caroline Winchester, 6 years at Wolbach and 3 years at Elba; Virginia Moon, Ralston and Marlene Uhing, Randolph, 5 years; Joyce Huffman, 4 years at Sumner-Eddyville-Miller; Jane Hornung, Paxton and Alberta Moore, Wausa, 3 years; France Blanchard, McPherson County, Gayla Fredrickson, Elgin, Katherine Meink, Spring View, and Cindy Wendell, Arapahoe, 2 years; Renee Jacobson,

first year at Plattsmouth; and beginner Amy Malander at Cedar Rapids.

Trends

The accompanying table presents a comparison of data from fall 1992 to Fall 2002 regarding the number of school districts, superintendent turnover, and women superintendents. Except for the increase in women superintendents, the numbers are decreasing in all other categories.

Given dwindling enrollments and a host of fiscal difficulties for many small, rural districts, it is likely that the number of Nebraska school districts and attendant superintendent positions will continue to decrease. Now that the national teaching force is estimated to be 75 to 80% female, it is likely also that the number of women superintendents will continue to grow.

There does not appear to be a fool-proof formula for predicting superintendent turnover in Nebraska, other than to say it is cyclical and to acknowledge that the variables affecting that cycle are subject to change. For example, in

Nebraska Public School Districts with High Schools and Superintendent Turnover Data, Fall 1992 vs. Fall 2002

<u>Item</u>	<u>Fall 1992</u>	<u>Fall 2002</u>
School Districts	295	265
Number Superintendents	291	254
Median Tenure in Pos.	4.53 yrs	3.60 yrs
Avg. Tenure in Posit.	7.43 yrs	5.99 yrs
Supts w/ 1-year Ten.	48	31
% Turnover	16.3	11.7
Supts w/ 20+ yrs Ten.	26	9
Women Superintendents	5	12

recent years many school boards complained that the candidate pool for superintendent vacancies was very thin. However, superintendent-search consultants are starting to report increased numbers of aspiring superintendents. If true, will that mean that school boards will become more discriminating in evaluating the performance of their current

(continued on page 10)



MEETING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS IN AN ERA OF INCREASING DEMANDS AND LIMITED RESOURCES

by Larry Grosshans, Assistant Superintendent, Norris Public Schools

The primary purpose of accreditation is to encourage schools to make the necessary efforts to insure, as much as possible, that all students have access to equitable educational opportunities and are receiving quality educational experiences regardless of where they attend school. In reality, accreditation is the means by which schools are held accountable to insure that all students have access to a comprehensive program of education and related services regardless of school size, geographical location, or the nature of its governing body. By law, all public schools in Nebraska are required to be accredited in order to legally operate. Being accredited essentially means that the school system meets the requirements set forth by Rule 10 from the Department of Education, known as the Regulations and Procedures for Accreditation of Schools. Non-public schools may voluntarily choose to be accredited by meeting these same requirements. In addition, both public and non-public schools in Nebraska can choose to be accredited by the North Central Association by meeting that association's standards and criteria and also being involved in a comprehensive plan of school improvement that focuses primarily on the academic progress of students. Most administrators understand and readily accept the requirements of accreditation because most administrators support the concept that all children in Nebraska are entitled to equitable and quality educational experiences and opportunities.

However today, many school administrators are experiencing considerable stress and frustration as they continue efforts to not only have their school system meet accreditation standards and but also meet additional expectations resulting from state legislation, court decisions, federal mandates, and special interest groups. Recently Rule 10 has been expanded to include (1) academic standards, assessments, and reporting stipulations, (2) safety/security plans and annual external audits, (3) require-

ments for being involved in a comprehensive school improvement plan over a five year cycle which must address multicultural education issues and (4) procedures for schools to comply with regarding Americanism and citizenship matters.

In addition to the accreditation issues above, schools today face a myriad of other situations, mandates, and expectations which require time, money, and personnel to deal with. These include such things as (1) developing policies and providing funds for dealing with student fee issues, (2) the mounting costs and regulations of special education programs and services, and (3) the anticipation of the additional requirements that "No Child Left Behind" may have upon schools, and (4) the various other situations which impact a school district's ability to continue to meet the ever increasing mandates whether they include dealing American's with Disabilities Acts, declining enrollments, aging buildings, English Language Learners, or whatever.

To complicate matters further, Nebraska schools operate under budget and spending and limitations. Cuts in state aid to schools have impacted a number of school districts across the state resulting in elimination of programs and personnel. School districts that are experiencing declining enrollments are hit especially hard by the state aid formula, because they still must maintain a level of programs and services to meet accreditation standards and other mandates in order to operate. Boards of Education and administrators often don't have much control over a large portion of the annual budget. Salaries are determined not so much by a district's ability to pay but what salaries are in similar school districts. There is little control over energy, utility, and transportation costs. Now school districts must come up with money to offset the loss of student fees and also provide requested services for students who qualify for waivers. In some

districts, these added expenses could be in the tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars. At the time of this writing, a special session of the legislature will be convened in the near future to deal with a severe shortage of revenues at the state level. This could certainly result in further cuts or delays in payments of state aid to school districts. The bottom line is that schools are being asked to do more and more with less and less in terms of time, personnel, and ultimately financial resources. Increased accountability is not without cost. In other words, there are greater expectations placed on school districts today than ever before, but at a time when resources either are dwindling or being spread too thin.

I don't pretend to have the answer of where this is all going or what the future holds for school districts in Nebraska. The one thing I can assure you of is that we are all dealing with the same issues and you are not alone in your deliberations and concerns. I have served for several years on the State Accreditation Committee and can assure you that members of that committee have on numerous occasions considered the ramifications of their recommendations on school districts across the state. At no time did they want to minimize accreditation standards and regulations just to insure that school districts could meet them. I am sure most readers would agree that would be counterproductive to the purposes of having accreditation standards in the first place. However, we were well aware of the hardships some school districts might have in continuing to meet these standards and regulations; especially in an era of greater demands, but one in which resources are not keeping pace.

I am reminded of advice once given regarding the difficulty of dealing with conflicts. The advice was to perceive the situation as being an opportunity rather than adversity and to use our knowledge and skill to resolve the situation in the

(continued on page 10)



KINDS OF SCHOOLS...

(continued from page 4)

decoding meaning in whatever forms are used in the culture to express or convey meaning. The mind must be constructive, it must be active, and the task of teaching is to facilitate effective mental action so that the work encountered becomes meaningful.

The kind of schools we need recognizes that some of the most important forms of learning are those that students know how to use outside of school, not just inside of school or to satisfy questions on some test. Furthermore, teachers in such schools consistently help students see the connections between the two. The transfer of learning cannot be assumed, it needs to be taught. The point of learning anything in school is not primarily to enable one to do well in school (although most parents believe this to be true) but to enable one to do well in life. Learning in school is to enrich life outside of school and to acquire the skills and ideas that will enable one to produce the questions and perform the activities that one's outside life will require.

The kind of schools we need takes seriously the concept that with regard to learning, the joy is in the journey and not just in the result. Intrinsic motivation counts the most because students do when they can do what they want to do is what really matters. We ought to stop reinforcing students' lust for mere "point accumulation" as it is not an educational aim. Educational aims have to do with matters of enlightenment, matters of developing abilities, and matters of aesthetic experience. What we ought to be focusing our attention on is the creation of conditions in our classrooms and in our schools that make the process of education a process that students wish to pursue.

The kind of schools we need encourages deep conversation in classrooms. They would help students to learn how to participate in that complex and subtle art, an art that requires learning how to listen as well as how to speak. All of us need to learn to engage in deep conversation. Conversations about ideas that matter to students and teachers and that occupy a central place in our cur-

riculum can be a powerful means of converting the academic institutions we call schools into intellectual institutions. This represents a paradigmatic shift in the culture of schools, but one that is needed in my opinion.

The kind of schools we need would help student gradually assume increased responsibility for framing their own goals and learning how to achieve them. The long-term aim of teaching is to make itself unnecessary. Plato once defined a slave as someone who executes the purposes of another. Over the grade levels, we have conceived of teaching as setting problems that students solve. We should be setting the conditions through which students set the problems they wish to pursue because this is what they will need to do once they leave the protective environment of the school.

The kind of schools we need make it possible for students who have particular interests to pursue those interests in depth and, at the same time, to work on public service projects that contribute to something larger than their own immediate interests. You see, a long-term aim of education should be how to engage in personally satisfying activities that are at the same time socially constructive. It is important that students learn there are people who need services and that student's can contribute to meet these people's needs. Service learning is an excellent move in this direction.

The kind of schools we need would make teaching a professionally public process whereby teachers would have opportunities to observe other teachers and provide feedback. For far too long, we have isolated teachers and left them to figure out by themselves what went on when they were teaching. Teachers need access to other teacher's classrooms. We need to find ways that makes possible teacher's access to one another in helpful and constructive ways. This will not be an easy task.

The kind of schools we need would provide time during the school day, at least once a week, for teachers to meet to discuss and share their work, their hopes, and their problems. In this regard, it is the school, not the university that is the real center of teacher educa-

tion. This concept is built upon the realization that whatever teachers become professionally, the process is not finished when they complete their teacher education program. Learning to teach is a lifetime endeavor and the growth of understanding and skill in teaching terminates only when we do. One thing we can be sure of is that the schools will be no better for the students who attend than it is for the teachers who teach there!

The kind of schools we need would use videotaped teaching episodes to refine teachers' ability to take the practice of teaching apart. Not in a negative sense, but as a way of enlarging our understanding of a complex and subtle process. Most of us would agree that teaching is a subtle and complex art. At least it is an art when it is done well. To teach really well, it is necessary to reflect on the processes of one's own teaching and on the teaching practices of others. Educators need to be reflective practitioners constantly analyzing what has taken place and seeking ways to improve. Analyzing videotapes can help us understand the relationship of teaching and learning by breaking down the complex act of teaching just as the Nebraska football coaches break down each play for analysis.

The kind of schools we need would be staffed by teachers who are as interested in the questions students ask after a unit of study, as they are in the answers students gives. Schools are highly answer-oriented whereby teachers have questions and students have answers. Even in a problem solving activity, the focus is on the student's ability to solve a problem that someone else has posed. Once in life situations, students will find that few things are defined as problems. We need to promote student growth whereby students are given an opportunity to pose questions and to entertain alternative perspectives on what they are studying.

The kind of schools we need would have the concept of "public education" as meaning not only the education of the public inside schools, but also the education of the public outside schools. The school's administration and faculty will

(continued on page 10)



KINDS OF SCHOOLS...

(continued from page 9)

find it hard to proceed farther or faster than the community will allow. It is the task of professional educators to nurture public conversation in order to create a collective vision of education. Our responsibilities as educators extend beyond the confines of the classroom and even beyond the walls of our schools. Principals and Superintendents ought to perform a leadership role in deepening that community conversation. We desperately need to create educational forums for members of the community in which the purposes and process of education can be discussed, deliberated and from which consensus can be agreed upon as well as those things upon which we disagree.

I realize that the kind of school that I have described will not be easy to attain. I also realize that the features I have described may not be ones that you cherish. However, that makes conversation possible and I invite you to begin conversations in your school and community so that out of the collective wisdom can come a VISION of education that our children deserve and that the vision will help create the kind of schools that our children need. 🗣️

WANTED

• North Platte High School is offering kitchen equipment for sale to any school district that may be interested. Please contact Paul Brochtrup at 308/535-7100 ext. 127



FYI



You can now
download the
NCSA!
Please visit
www.ncsa.org

MEETING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS...(from page 8)

most amicable manner possible. In applying that same advice to the issues facing Nebraska administrators today, I am confident in time we will be able to effectively deal with these challenges and continue to provide Nebraska's students with the best educational programs and services possible. I have been in education in Nebraska the past 38 years, 33 as a school administrator, and have come to firmly believe Nebraska's school administrators are as fine a group of people as you will find anywhere in this great country. Their dedication, perseverance, and sheer determination will continue to cause Nebraska's schools to be some of the finest in the nation as evidenced by our students' academic progress and performance. 🗣️

SMALL-SIZE SCHOOLS...(continued from page 2)

organizational structure runs in one direction only: bigger and bigger. Large schools may be better for a period of time, but as neighborhoods change, the positive they once harbored did turn negative. Large city schools that were once prosperous beyond measure are now widely believed to be "ungovernable." This was caused by making them difficult to govern by making them large—expanding the levels of governance, piling on expertise after expertise—in the pursuit of efficiency.

Despite widespread agreement that the scale of most schools is too large, prescriptions for ideal size vary. Researchers defined small schools as enrolling 300 to 400 students in high school; however, researchers also suggested that the most suitable size is likely to vary from place to place with a community's relative poverty or affluence being a major factor. Small schools clearly provide an achievement advantage for impoverished students, while affluent students may fare better in larger schools.

Overall, research supports academic achievement in small schools was at least equal—and often superior—to that of large schools. This holds true for students of all ability levels and in all kinds of

NEBRASKA SUPERINTENDENT TURNOVER SLOWS...

(from page 7)

superintendents? Though comfort is an elusive sentiment for a school superintendent, many who otherwise may have been ready to make a career move are staying put, if they are in a school district where the finance picture is relatively stable. Should Nebraska ever again achieve a circumstance where school revenues are sufficient and predictable, will that cause experienced superintendents to be more apt to consider moving to other districts?

As always, changes are easier to explain after they have happened. However, one thing is certain: The school superintendency will continue to be a challenging job. 🗣️

settings. The literature also supported evidence of higher graduation rates for students attending small-size schools; students from small-size schools had participation rates proportionately higher than large-size schools; increasing the size of the student body corresponded to a similar rise in the school dropout rate; and student satisfaction and attendance are higher in small schools.

In a statement made by Paul Houston, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, this article can be summarized with, "A part of leadership is finding and promoting workable alternatives. Why does smallness work? First, everything is just easier. Smallness requires participation, which creates engagement. It's hard to get lost in a small school. And it's hard to hide. People come to know each other and to care for each other. As a practical matter, we are stuck with generations of schools that were built with "big" in mind. The first step, though, is to understand that thinking big sometimes starts by thinking small". 🗣️



2002-2003 NCSA SPONSORS

ARCHITECTS

The Architectural Partnership

Todd Hesson/Jim Dyck
206 So. 13th Street, Ste 906
Lincoln, NE 68508
402/475-6066
fax: 402/475-0718
info@taparch.com
www.taparch.com

Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects

Jim Berg
121 So. 13th Street, Suite 200
Lincoln, NE 68508
402/475-4551
fax: 402/475-0226
srichardson@bvh.com
www.bvh.com

Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, P.C.

Jim Cannon
2535 Carleton Avenue, Suite A
Grand Island, NE 68803
308/384-4444
fax: 308/384-0971
cannon@cccusa.net

Prochaska & Associates

Donald F. Prochaska
11317 Chicago Circle
Omaha, NE 68154-2633
402/334-0755
fax: 402/334-0868
prochaska@earthlink.net

The Schemmer Associates Inc.

R. William Cramer, AIA
1044 N. 115th Street, Ste 300
Omaha, NE 68154
402/493-4800
fax: 402/493-7951
bcramer@schemmer.com
www.schemmer.com

AWARDS, PLAQUES TROPHIES

Awards Unlimited

Larry King
1935 O Street
Lincoln, NE 68510
800/950-3553
www.awardsunlimited.com

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Beckenbauer Construction Inc.

Lowell Beckenhauer Jr.
P.O. Box 882
1901 Riverside Blvd.
Norfolk, NE 68702
402/371-5363
fax: 402/371-1129
office@BeckenbauerConstruction.com
www.BeckenbauerConstruction.com

Siemens

David Raymond
13510 Discovery Drive
Omaha, NE 68137
402/827-4115
fax: 402/891-8175
david.Raymond@sbt.siemens.com
www.sbt.siemens.com

INSURANCE

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Nebraska

Kurt Genrich
1233 Lincoln Mall
Lincoln, NE 68508
402/458-4810
fax: 402/477-2952
kurt.genrich@bcbsne.com

Horace Mann Companies

Cindy Dornbush
11329 P Street, Suite 122
Omaha, NE 68137
402/331-0509
fax: 402/331-0756
dornbuc1@notes.horacemann.com
www.horacemann.com

Met Life Resources

Bob Curry
17740 Pioneer Trail
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402/298-7103
fax: 402/298-7131
bc Curry5941@yahoo.com

INVESTMENTS

Nebraska School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus

Clifford Dale
7300 Old Post Road, #13
Lincoln, NE 68506
402/483-1678
fax: 402/483-1678
cdale@ambacsecurities.com

SCHOOL & COMPUTER FURNITURE & SUPPLIES

Gateway Computers

Tim Christensen
16112 Arbor Street
Omaha, NE 68130
402/330-4858
fax: 402/330-4132
www.gateway.com

Spectrum Industries Inc.

Jim Lloyd
PO Box 400
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
800/235-1262
fax: 800/335-0473
spectrum@spectrumfurniture.com
www.spectrumfurniture.com

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Applied Information Management Institute

Michael Shain
118 South 19th Street, Suite 1A
Omaha, NE 68102
402/345-5025
fax: 402/345-5028
mike@nebraska.org
www.schoolink.org

DLR Group

Pat Phelau
400 Essex Ct.
Omaha, NE 68114
402/393-4100
fax: 402/393-8747
pphelan@dlrgroup.com
www.dlrgroup.com

Johnson Controls, Inc.

Josh Wilkens
14238 Hillside Circle
Omaha, NE 68137
402/891-5839
fax: 402/331-1022
joshua.j.wilkens@JCI.com
www.JohnsonControls.com



Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

2	NSASSP Region IV, 1:30 p.m., ESU #10	Kearney
7	Reduction In Force Workshop, 9:00 a.m., ESU #13	Scottsbluff
8	Reduction In Force Workshop, 9:00 a.m. Midtown Holiday Inn	Grand Island
8	NASA Region II, 5:00 p.m., Farmer Browns	Papillion
9	NASA Region III, 9:00 a.m., Wayne State College	Wayne
9	NASA Region V, 12:00 noon, Eagles Club	Bridgeport
9	Western NE School Admin., 12:00 noon, Eagles Club	Gering
9	NAESP Region III, 9:00 a.m., Wayne State College	Wayne
10	NASA Region IV, 10:00 a.m., ESU #10	Kearney
11	Reduction In Force Workshop, 9:00 a.m. Lifelong Learning Center	Norfolk
16	NAESP Region I, 2:00 p.m., David City Elementary	David City
17	NCSA Executive Board, 9:00 a.m. LeRoy Hoehner Conf. Center	Lincoln
19	All Principals Golf Tournament, 1:00 p.m. Meadowlark	Kearney
20-21	All Principals Conference, 1:00 p.m., Holiday Inn	Kearney
20	NAESP Executive Board, 10:00 a.m., Holiday Inn	Kearney
20	NSASSP Executive Board, 10:00 a.m., Holiday Inn	Kearney
23	NASA Region I, 4:00 p.m., Evening with Friends	Milligan
25	Paraeducators' Conf., 8:15 a.m., Ramada Inn	Kearney
30	Superintendent Leadership, 8:00 a.m., Gallup	Lincoln

NOVEMBER

6	NAESP Region III, 3:00 p.m., Lifelong Learning Center	Norfolk
8	NAESP Region I, 12:00 noon, Chances R	York
13	NASA Region V, 12:00 noon, Country Club	Alliance
13	Western NE School Admin., 12:00 noon, Country Club	Bridgeport
13	NSASSP Region III, 2:00 p.m., ESU #8	Neligh
13	NSASSP Region I, 5:30 p.m., York Country Club	York
13	NSASSP Region II, 5:30 p.m., German Am. Society	Omaha
14-15	NAESP/NDE Joint Conference, 1:00 p.m. Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
18	Assistant Principals Conf., 9:00 a.m. Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
20-22	NASA/NASB State Convention, 1:00 p.m. Holiday Inn Central	Omaha
20	NASA Executive Board, 12:00 noon, Holiday Inn Central	Omaha
22	NASA General Membership, 9:00 a.m. Holiday Inn Central	Omaha

2003 NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

- ASBO – October 31-November 4 – Charlotte, NC
- AASA – February 20-23 – New Orleans, LA
- NASSP – February 21-24 – San Diego, CA
- ASCD – March 8-10 – San Francisco, CA
- NSBA – April 5-8 – San Francisco, CA
- NAESP – April 12-15 – Anaheim, CA

NCSA
455 So. 11th Street, Suite A
Lincoln, NE 68508-2105

PRSR STD.
 U. S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 LINCOLN, NE
 PERMIT NO. 951

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED