

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEBRASKA COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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NEBRASKA, SMELL THE COFFEE...TAKE ACTION!

by Katie Mathews, Park Elementary School, Kearney, NE



Mathews

The Research is Crystalline Clear:

A child's success in school begins before the child even enters our kindergarten classrooms.

We know from much research that by age 3 there is already a substantial achievement gap between economically disadvantaged and advantaged children in vocabulary and print concepts. We also know that many disadvantaged children entering kindergarten have been exposed to half the verbal and written language of their advantaged peers. One in five children who enter kindergarten are completely unfamiliar with the conventions of print (e.g., words read left to

right, top to bottom). That figure changes to one in three with low-income children, and one in two for minority children.

Now this should wake you up Nebraska, because here is a lesser known and very frightening reality: Data published in 2002 by the Economic Policy Institute indicates that middle-class children enter kindergarten with reading and math skill levels closer to those of the poorest children than those of the most affluent. In Nebraska, lower- and middle-class children represent the large majority of our students.

And there is a preponderance of research that shows that without early intervention, this gap in learning doubles by high school. These critical pre-reading

skills and experiences have a profound impact on the child all the way through school and carry over into adulthood. **This is not just an educational issue; it is a social and economic issue for our state.**

So Much Can Be Done:

In addition to the fact that we are blatantly aware of the problem, there is an enormous body of research that shows the impact that we as educators can have on all children if we are willing to intercede early. If you aren't familiar with the research, check out the extensive studies that started over 40 years ago (yes, over 40 years ago) and continue to date. There are the early studies known collectively as the "trio of early childhood studies" that include the Perry Preschool, Carolina Abecedarian Project, and the Chicago Child Parent Center Program. There are more recent studies conducted, the Cornell Consortium,

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NEBRASKA SUPERINTENDENT TURNOVER SURGES

by James E. Ossian, NARSA

Washington Irving wrote, "There is a certain relief in change, even though it be from bad to worse! As I have often found in traveling in a stagecoach, that it is often a comfort to shift one's position, and be bruised in a new place." Let us hope, metaphorically, that changing school superintendent positions is not from bad to worse, and that bruising is not incurred from shifting to a new place, because many Nebraska school leaders have chosen to do so.

After two relatively modest years of superintendent movement, 33 in 2002 and 31 in 2003, there will be 46 Nebraska public school districts with high schools that have a new leader at the helm to begin the 2004-2005 school year. Retirement is still the major

factor in superintendent turnover, numbering 23 individuals the past year; 15 school executives assumed another superintendency, four of whom left the state; five moved to principal positions, most of those moves prompted by organizational restructuring; and three left the field of education.

Median and average tenure in position, 3.83 years and 6.12 years respectively, are slightly less than that of the previous year. Superintendent turnover in the state has averaged 45.1 positions over the past 26 years. Eighteen of the 46 new superintendents will be in the head job for the first time, and 135 of Nebraska's 248 (54.4 percent) school districts will have leaders with four years

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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.



CHARTING STARS: A THREE-YEAR VIEW

by Chris Gallagher University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The Comprehensive Evaluation Project (CEP) was launched in 2001. Its purpose was – and is – to provide an independent evaluation of the state’s School-based, Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System. I have been fortunate enough to serve as Coordinator and Principal Investigator for the CEP since its inception. (I recently stepped down as Principal Investigator, placing those reins in the capable hands of Professor Jody Isernhagen, also of University of Nebraska-Lincoln.) The CEP is housed at UNL and staffed by researchers from the College of Arts and Sciences and College of Education and Human Services (formerly Teachers College). We have also contracted out several studies. Over the past three years, we have interviewed approximately 350 educators and surveyed 3500 educa-

tors around the state of Nebraska. In addition, we have observed dozens of meetings and workshops run by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Our three annual reports, submitted to Commissioner Douglas Christensen and the State Board of Education, are available at www.nde.ne.us/stars. My purpose in this article is to identify some of our major findings over the past three years. In doing so, I hope to help you put in context the long and unprecedented journey the state of Nebraska has embarked upon under the STARS.

First, the Numbers

The most basic measure of success for any standards, assessment, and accountability system is whether students show learning growth. For a system like STARS, which also values

teacher learning, we must examine teacher growth, as well – in this case, in “assessment literacy.” Of course, STARS is still a young system, and so it is just beginning to generate reliable data over time. Its reporting procedures also require us to examine the performance of different groups of students. (For a discussion of the need for new metrics for examining STARS data, see our Year Three Report.) That said, CEP researchers have analyzed STARS data to determine whether there were gains in student and school performance from 2001 to 2003 (for both years, schools reported reading results). Here is what they found:

- Increases in the average percentage of students proficient on reading CRTs at all three grade levels (4th, 8th, and 11th)
- Stable student performance on reading NRTs at all three grade levels
- Significant increases in average portfolio ratings

(For the specific figures, see our Year Three Report.) In short, both student learning, as measured by percentage of students proficient in reading, and teacher learning, as measured by portfolio ratings (including assessment quality), are on the rise. Of course, there is much more work to be done in examining the data generated by STARS. We also have some evidence that assessments in use in Nebraska schools – CRTs and NRTs – are not as high quality as they need to be in order to make reliable inferences about student performance. (There is a difference, remember, between the quality of assessment portfolios and the quality of the actual assessments on which the portfolio is based.) But on the basic numbers level, we see significant progress.

Going Deeper

Of course, numbers never tell the whole story. An important goal of the CEP has been to learn about STARS from the perspectives of those who bear primary responsibility to carry out its charge: teachers and administrators.

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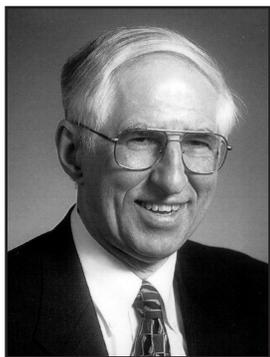
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PERSPECTIVES

by Jerry Sellentin, Ph.D., Executive Director



Sellentin

IS IT POSSIBLE?

NCSA OFFICE BUILDING:

Is it possible ten years have passed since we had the ground-breaking ceremony for the NCSA's office building? The calendar has a habit of reminding us how fast time flies. On October 13, 1994 a ground-breaking ceremony was held by the NCSA's Executive Board, staff and Ron Oswald, Superintendent of Centennial Public Schools as Chair of the Building Committee.

The NCSA Office Building has no mortgage or loans and, of course, this is better than collecting rent receipts. To keep current for making presentations, instead of using the over-head, Mike Dulaney is installing top-of-the-line Audio/Visual Technology in the LeRoy Hoehner Conference Center. This technology is being paid for in part by the Nebraska Association of School Business Officials. Another improvement for NCSA members will be the availability of additional parking, with a lot which has just been purchased to the west of the NCSA Office Building.

Members can take pride in having a modern and functional office building, but it's the members who make NCSA successful. In 2005 NCSA will be celebrating thirty-five years of SUCCESS. NCSA as a professional organization values its members and their support.

POLLS:

I have received copies of two polls which I think will be of interest to members. The first poll is from the Horatio Alger Association 2004 survey of 1,007 young people between the ages of thirteen and nineteen from across the United States. A summary of the report reveals youth are optimistic about their future, they get along with their parents, and they are seeking a balance of career success and happy families of their own. The nation's youth believe their schools

and teachers care about their grades and safety and they have taken the necessary steps to ensure safety in their schools. Just over six in ten teens think the election's outcome will make a large or fairly large difference in the country's direction regarding the most important issues facing our nation. Ninety percent plan to continue their education after high school. A complete report is available at <http://www.horatioalger.org>.

The second poll is the 36th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll. Of interest is the report of sixteen conclusions that capture the poll's most significant findings. The complete survey is available at <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0409/pol.htm>. I would like to share several of the sixteen conclusions for your coffee break discussion:

1. The trend line showing the public in general gives reasonably high marks to the public schools continues. Those marks go higher when parents do the rating and even higher when parents rate the school their oldest child attends.

2. Lack of financial support is now firmly established in the public's mind as the major problem facing public schools. This finding is the same as Nebraska

administrators listed as the number-one issue in Nebraska at the 2004 Administrators' Days Conference.

3. Sixty-eight percent of the public lack information it believes it would need to form an opinion about NCLB. This compares to seventy-six percent of respondents last year who said they knew little or nothing about NCLB.

4. The idea of allowing parents to choose a private school for their child to attend at public expense continues to lack majority support.

5. A dead heat results when respondents are asked which of the Presidential candidates they would support if they were voting solely on education issues. George Bush and John Kerry each draw support from forty-one percent of respondents.

Today as I write this article, there are seven weeks left before the election. It will be interesting to see how the media, as well as the Presidential candidates, influence the voters before November 2.

CHINESE PROVERB

Want one year of prosperity grow grain,
Want ten years of prosperity grow trees,
Want hundred years of prosperity grow people. 🙏

NSDLAF+ NOTES #17

The Nebraska School District Liquid Asset Fund+ is celebrating sixteen (16) years of service to Nebraska School Districts, Educational Service Units and Community Colleges. The cooperative responsible for the organization and management of NSDLAF involves a board of trustees made up of school administrators or board of education members from member districts and educational service units. Since the origination of NSDLAF+, the services provided have extended to the purchase of fixed income investment vehicles, the investment of bond proceeds during construction and the implementation of

"Compass," an automated, web-based system for direct real-time monitoring of investments. Endorsement by both the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators has facilitated the expansion of services available to participants as a result of membership.

For information on the benefits to your school district, educational service unit or community college for participation in NSDLAF+, contact Cliff Dale, Senior Marketing Representative, PFM Asset Management LLC, 402-483-1678, or dalec@pfm.com 🙏



"CHANGING THE CONVERSATION"

by Doug Christensen, Commissioner of Education



Doesn't it make good sense to involve people and their views when we want to come up with new ideas, solve problems or resolve conflicts? Doesn't it make sense to try to bring the various points of view together into a consensus? Sure it does, but it rarely works.

What's wrong with this kind of strategy is that a consensus is often reached but the consensus often does not have the full support of the group. The consensus rarely evokes the kind of ownership that is hoped for. What's wrong is that this kind of strategy usually has only one kind of conversation. And, a different kind of conversation is needed.

Before we move to this new kind of conversation, let's be sure we understand how consensus models work and the limitations inherent in both the consensus-building strategies and the ultimate agreement or consensus. First, consensus models tend to be preferred because they are quick and efficient because we are all pressed and stressed for time. But, what tends to happen is that we rarely come up with new ideas or compromise ideas that generate excitement and energy. Often we just end up "rounding off the sharp corners" of former ideas or old debates and even more often, driving the real issues or conflicts underground.

Compromise is certainly the name of the game and the mark of progress, but when we engage in consensus building as our only strategy, we are actually asking people to give up a part, or all, of their ideas, beliefs, and principles in order to reach a "common ground."

How many times have you been engaged in consensus building that resulted in a compromise of common ground but was not something everyone could support? This happens when people are asked to "give up in order to get." It is hard for people to support an outcome that results from compromises made by giving up on ideas, strongly held beliefs and long standing personal prin-

ciples.

What is also wrong with this model is that people don't always come to the table as equals. Some participants use their "higher" status and don't play fair. Some individuals are able to get their views on the table at the expense of others because of some perceived or real hierarchy operating blatantly or subtly in the room. Consensus models can reach common ground because one person or group has the capacity to "trump" the ideas or contributions of others.

We need different strategies for compromise in public policy issues and especially in education policy. There is no question that the more people are involved in public issues, like education, there will be more differences of opinions, more competing ideas, more conflicting issues and more problems to solve. And, there is no question that compromise is the tool of progress. However, we need different strategies other than consensus models if our progress is to make things better and improve results.

Instead of searching for consensus, we need to think of strategies where all voices are equal and welcome and where we can reach for "higher" ground instead of settling for "common" ground.

What is a "higher" ground strategy? First, higher ground strategies eliminate winners and losers. Second, higher ground strategies don't make us give up so much that we often cannot support the results. Third, higher ground strategies involve dialog and conversation. True dialog is only possible because the group, regardless of differences, comes together around a common center. In higher ground strategies the ideas and views of everyone find a place under the umbrella of a bigger notion or concept that aligns or resonates with the "common center."

Higher ground strategies work out the "whys" of the issue or problem before they focus on the "whats and hows." In fact, with higher ground strategies the "whys" are big ideas, big issues, big purposes and vastly more important than the "hows and whats." When groups get clear about the "whys," they

tend to find that different kinds of "hows" and "whats" become feasible.

We need to change the conversation about education issues. We need to move to higher ground especially on the big issues and spend a lot more time talking about the "whys," the purposes, the desired outcomes, etc.

What is the higher ground for education? When we come together as groups to deal with education ideas and issues, we need the common center that clearly states "this is about students and their learning." "How will this proposal, idea or strategy help our students learn and learn better or more?" is a key question for moving to the higher ground. As educators, we must come to the discussion with unequivocal advocacy for children, for quality teaching and for excellent schools. We should never waiver from this center.

I think we will be surprised at how many seemingly un-resolvable issues become not quite so intractable when everyone at the table knows that what drives the profession of education is this deep and common center of children, teaching and learning.

We should be clear and unequivocal about what it is we want our students to know and be able to do. We should be able to articulate how an issue, idea or strategy will impact our students and their learning. We should be clear that the reason our schools exist is teaching and learning.

As we move into a new school year with new issues and problems to solve and as we move into a new legislative year with issues and problems to solve, I hope our thinking is more in terms of higher ground. I hope we can frame our issues and ideas in terms of essential education, equity of opportunity, equity of outcomes or results, all schools, and all children.

As educators, it is our responsibility to bring the higher ground to the table and to be vocal advocates for our children and their education. In "our world" there is no higher ground than that which is stated in terms of our students and their learning. And, if we don't bring this higher ground to the table no one else likely will.

It is time to change our strategy and change the conversation! 



READING NOW AND THEN

by Ann Mactier, State Board of Education

When I was a young mother, my children had problems with their schoolwork in spite of the fact that they were obviously intelligent. I went on sharp alert to find out what the problem was. My oldest son's kind first-grade teacher took it upon herself to tell me, "I am afraid to push him, I'm very careful." His eighth-grade teacher volunteered, "He has a problem, but I don't know what it is." My youngest son's kindergarten teacher said, "He is borderline. He may have a problem; I don't know what it is" When that son was in fourth grade, his teacher asked me, "Do you want me to try to work on his penmanship?" I answered, "We all have bad penmanship. Don't bother," and took him to typing class. As for their sister, I didn't realize until much later that she, my middle child had more problems than either of them. Born in 1947, 1950, and 1953, they are kind, healthy people today, for which I am very thankful.

In the late 1970s I was a member of an organization called the Greater Omaha Community Council. We wanted to accomplish things, and decided to have a public forum to discuss subjects we thought important to Omaha. I proposed that we include a talk by a teacher who was traveling around the country giving workshops on teaching reading. Her name was Oma Riggs, and she had given a couple of workshops here, about which I had heard very good things.

The GOCC and I invited Oma to speak at our forum on October 30, 1979; I rented equipment, big and bulky in those days, to tape her talk, because I wanted to remember everything she said. What I heard made me think that she really could have helped my children! Too late then, though. They were 32, 29 and 26.

So, to find out what she could do, I asked Oma to help me run a summer school in North Omaha, and we did run one for eight weeks in 1982 and another for seven weeks in 1983. Oma was there for about three weeks for each of them. An ad ran in the paper and brought in twenty or so children of mixed ages. What Oma accomplished in those summers told me definitely that she could have helped my children.

We started out by teaching her students to write letters. They learned to do that in about two weeks and then we started teaching them to hear, say, write and read the first 54 phonograms of Orton's code.

Phonograms! "Phono" for sound and "gram" for letter. Dr. Samuel Orton, was a neurologist/pathologist, who lived in Iowa City from 1919 to 1929 building and administering what was called a "psychopathic hospital." He found young people around Iowa City who couldn't read, who were called "reading-disabled." Teachers had been coming into Iowa from the University of Chicago teacher college and lab school that did not teach children to sound out words. Orton devised the phonograms, a code with which he cured young people of their reading disability by teaching them to say, write and spell the phonograms. In our summer school, Oma Riggs and I taught the children the first 54 phonograms. We taught them to hear, say, spell and write them and then to use them to sound out words to spell and read them. It wasn't until many years after that, that I realized that my daughter couldn't sound out words at all! How could anyone learn to spell and read who couldn't sound out words? Why did it take me so long to realize it? She was 47 years old when I finally realized the extent of her problem.

I was on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea in 1979. A guide pointed out a huge rock with writing on it, which he said was one of the earliest pieces of writing in existence. It was written by a Greek merchant some time around 3000 BC according to Juliam Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, 1976, page 68, and was a record of a shipment of some kind. I looked at that writing hard and noticed that some of the Greek's sigma's [s's] faced right and some faced left. The guide said, "They alternated the direction in which they wrote with every line. "And suddenly, I knew how my daughter had taught herself to read.

I told her about this as soon as I got home, and said to her, "Jan, you are a genius, you made it up, just like the Greeks did!" Because no one had taught her to write or read when she wanted to learn, she made up her own system. And, in some ways it worked well for her. She got the highest number right of anyone in her Connecticut boarding school on multiple choice tests, because she read faster than anyone and answered more questions right. She loved to read and she read a lot! At boarding school, she would shut herself up in the closet at night so that

she could turn the light on to read!

But when it came to writing, well, things did not go well. She got letters and words out of order and couldn't see her mistakes. Her English teacher asked her, "What language do your parents speak?" "What language do your grandparents speak?" "What language do your other grandparents speak?" That teacher had no more idea than I did that she alternated reading lines from left to right. Her math was bad, too, maybe hopeless. As I said before, I searched for a long time to find out what her problems were.

From 1983 to 1998 I served on the School Board of the Omaha Public Schools. Since 1996, I have served on the Nebraska State Board and am now finishing my second four-year term. I have attended 56 meetings in 23 cities over these 22 years, always trying to find out why not only Jan, but so many children have trouble learning to write, spell and read. I think that a main reason is that we don't teach children to sound out words. I think now that all children would profit by learning first to hear, say and spell the Orton code. It is like a 70-letter alphabet that contains a lot of helpful information about the English language.

Young children, well taught, learn the code easily and happily, by hearing it, saying it, writing it and chanting it in unison in their classes. Chanting works, and children love to chant together in unison and they learn a lot that way. I have seen kindergarten, first grade and older children happily chanting grammar rules, and am *amazed* by how much grammar they know. It will certainly serve them well whatever they do in life!

But to get back to today - and to me growing older every year whether I want to or not - things are really starting to come around with writing and reading in Nebraska. "Reading First" is going very well here. There were already teachers in Nebraska who wanted to use Spalding, and they are getting their way in Nebraska Reading First which is teaching the Orton code! I hope that more Nebraska teachers are learning it every day and are starting to see how useful it is.

Nebraska Reading First at its best is a lot the same as what I taught in my two summer schools in 1982 and 1983. Still, there are some things that need to be done better. For instance, some teachers today think children can only learn to say, write and spell one phonogram a week. When I went to visit an OPS first grade one day in the mid 1980s, I

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CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS ARE MUCH LIKE CONTACT SPORTS

by Chris Effken, Superintendent, Friend Public Schools

The negotiations process continues to take up large amounts of time and effort in every school district and at times the level of gamesmanship in some places, in pursuit of the perfect master agreement, looks like contact sport. Ongoing, almost continuous communication between superintendents and education association negotiators can help minimize the time Board members and teachers spend at the negotiations table. There are some tools currently available that can assist in these efforts behind the scenes.

About three years ago this writer began collecting negotiations data such as base salary, insurance plan options, student count, contract length, and the like from the Central Eight conference schools as a way to keep up with what was occurring in negotiating in our part of the world. It soon became obvious that conference data was not a large enough pool to discover what the trends in current negotiating were.

The second year, data from the conference and from the schools in ESU 6 were collected and every week or so the compiled data would be shared with those schools that individually supplied information. Mostly through word of

mouth this exercise grew into more than could have ever been imagined. In the third year over 100 schools share this data. If this level of interest would have been known early on, the exercise may not have been begun or maybe the receiver's list would not have been expanded. However, now that it is set up, it is relatively easy to maintain.

At its recent membership meeting in York, the Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) legal counsel described discussions with a Nebraska software developer that may reduce the fact-finding and comparability component of negotiating to something as simple as pressing the return key on your computer. Software currently exists and is available for a reasonable price, in this writer's opinion, to allow individual schools to select an array and at the click of the return key, create a comparable offer for use at the table or sharing with education association negotiators before coming to the table. NASB is hoping to negotiate a group purchase deal to make the product even more affordable for each of its members.

Green with envy is a phrase to describe feelings towards those districts, which have begun negotiations

and settled in one meeting. This software may now make single meeting settlements possible for every school district, with at-the-table time being saved by use of away-from-the-table discussions with education members ahead of meeting with board members.

The data collection and dissemination described in this writing three years ago was begun as a way of allowing Superintendents and Boards to be informed with up-to-the-minute accurate negotiations data and so that they would feel comfortable in responding to offers and claims at the table from their respective education associations.

Behind-the-scenes dialog with education associations, sharing of up-to-date, accurate data among schools and widespread use of same or similar software described above can remove a major portion of the anxiety of negotiations and leave time for more popular chores, like battling a Wintel engaged in NDE's ever-popular GMS Web site.

Just kidding, Dr. Christensen, hope you know.

See all of you at the NASB/NCSA convention in Omaha. 🧑🧑🧑

Breaking Ranks II:

Seven Cornerstone Strategies to Improve Student Performance

1 Establish the essential learnings a student is required to master in order to graduate, and adjust the curriculum and teaching strategies to realize that goal.

2 Increase the quantity and improve the quality of interactions between students, teachers, and other school personnel by reducing the number of students for which any adult or group of adults is responsible.

3 Implement a comprehensive advisory program that ensures that each student has frequent and mean-

ingful opportunities to plan and assess his or her academic and social progress with a faculty member.

4 Ensure that teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.

5 Implement schedules flexible enough to accommodate teaching strategies consistent with the ways students learn most effectively and that allow for effective teacher teaming and lesson planning.

6 Institute structural leadership changes that allow for meaningful involvement in decision making by students, teachers, family members, and the community and that support effective communication with these groups.

7 Align the schoolwide comprehensive, ongoing professional development program and the individual Personal Learning Plans of staff members with the content knowledge and instructional strategies required to prepare students for graduation.



Book Review by Ron Joekel

HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET?

written by Tom Rath and Don Clifton

Gallup Press, ISBN 1-59562-003-6 (2004). \$19.95

For those who have heard Dr. Clifton speak or have been fortunate enough to be enrolled in a class or seminar that he taught, his "Dipper and Bucket" presentation will be familiar. If it doesn't resonate with you, this book is one that you should, without a doubt, read.

I know you are all busy people, but there are more good useable lessons presented in this short book (116 pages), that you can immediately put into practice than almost any other book I have recently read.

This is a poignant book sharing the mutual love and respect of a grandson and his grandfather. The grandson experienced health problems while growing up and the grandfather was diagnosed with cancer at the twilight of his life. Both shared in the central theme of the book with many experiences and examples as they collaborate on writing the book, concluding just weeks before Dr. Clifton's death in 2003.

Dr. Clifton spent a lifetime as a psychologist, and is recognized internationally as the father of strength psychology, focusing on *what is right with people* instead of the traditional *what is wrong with people*, as so many psychologists were prone to do.

One of the intriguing facts in the book is how Dr. Clifton began to research his theory of focusing on what is right with people following the Korean War when he reviewed the stories of American Prisoners of War who had been detained in a North Korean camp. It had a 38 percent death rate which was the highest POW rate in U.S. Military history. A new disease of extreme hopelessness was found to be prevalent or "give up it is" as some called it. Due to treatment by the North Koreans, it was found that many POW's experienced psychological and emotional isolation. The treatment was the ultimate weapon of war and based on four primary tactics:

- Informing
- Self-Criticism
- Breaking loyalty to leadership and

country

- Withholding all positive emotional support

Simply put, the POWs were encouraged to dip from their comrades' bucket every day. These data prompted Dr. Clifton and colleagues to explore if instead of focusing on negativity, they focused on the positive side of interactions. The research question of can positivism have an even stronger impact than negativity? From research of business, employees, and CEOs worldwide Clifton and his associates inspired the "Dipper and Bucket" theory. Simply stated the theory is:

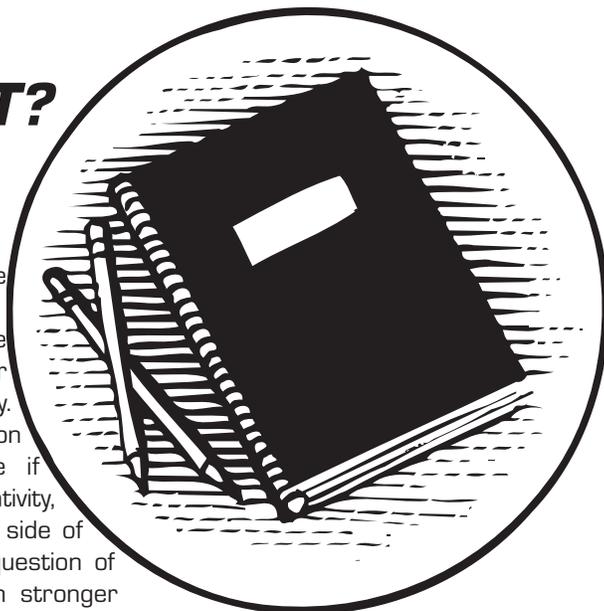
- Everyone has an invisible bucket. We are at our best when our buckets are overflowing—and at our worst when they are empty.

• Everyone has an invisible dipper. In each interaction, we can use our dipper either to fill or to dip from others' buckets.

- Whenever we choose to fill others' buckets, we in turn fill our own.

Clifton and Rath take the reader through a series of illustrations and examples of how negativity impacts people with a startling statistic that the number one reason people leave their jobs is that they don't feel appreciated, bad bosses could increase the risk of poor health and a stroke by 33 percent, the cost of disengagement is between \$250-\$300 billion per year, negative employees scare off customers, and 65 percent of Americans receive no recognition in the workplace.

The authors then turn to the positive side where they found that nine out of ten people say they are more productive when they're around positive people. Positive emotions are an essential daily requirement for survival (I thought just like the vitamin ads!). A "magic ration" has been devised of five positive interactions for every one negative interaction is powerful for physical, emotional and mental health effects. However, the pos-



itive interactions must be meaningful and not overdone as they state that more than 132 positive interactions for every one negative interaction could decrease productivity.

Chapter six provides *five strategies for increasing positive emotions* that is at the heart of the "Dipper and Bucket" theory:

Strategy One . . .

Prevent Bucket Dipping

Strategy Two . . .

Shine a Light on What is Right

Strategy Three . . . Make Best Friends

Strategy Four . . . Give Unexpectedly

Strategy Five . . .

Reverse the Golden Rule

Each strategy is explained in detail and rather than me giving you a run down on each, it will be more meaningful for you to discover them yourself.

The book also directs you to a Web site (www.bucketbook.com) where you can explore how full is your bucket by taking a 15 question positive impact test. Readers are also provided an invitation card with a 16-digit ID code that will allow them to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment free of charge. It will provide you an assessment and provide you with data about your top five talents.

Summary:

A long review for such a short book, but I think you can feel the excitement I sensed when reading the book, and it has great implications for each of us as

(continued on page 12)



VISION SYMPOSIUM

One out of five children entering kindergarten in Nebraska has an undetected vision problem. Students' performances in school and extracurricular activities may suffer because of visual disorders—disorders that can usually be corrected or accommodated when diagnosed. Symptoms are often hard to detect. Children may not know they have a problem, so they don't complain. Parents and educators mistakenly believe there are no problems because there are no complaints or obvious indications. The end result—children don't get the help they need.

The Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision (NFCV), along with their Symposium Partners, invite you to attend the 2004 Children's Vision and Learning Symposium. This event will be

held on October 26, 2004, at Mahoney State Park beginning at 8:30 a.m. The agenda will focus on identifying opportunities to improve the continuum of vision care for Nebraska's school children. Program participants and speakers will share inter-professional perspectives on protocols and resources, including resources in the educational system, in public health, and in the private health-care sector and how they can most effectively be accessed and utilized. Anyone with an interest in the development and welfare of children will benefit from this Symposium. The Symposium will be particularly relevant for educators, school administrators, early childhood professionals, eyecare professionals, parents and others involved in children's health care delivery. Please refer

to the included forms for registration details.

The 2004 Symposium Partners include: NE Council of School Administrators, NE School Boards Association, NE School Nurses Association, NE Optometric Association, NE Library Commission, as well as the NFCV. The Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision, a 501(c)3, is an educational and charitable foundation that seeks to ensure that every child entering school in Nebraska is visually prepared to learn. For more information on the work of the NFCV visit the website at: www.NEchildrensvision.org or contact the office at: 402-474-7716.



UPCOMING EVENTS...

October 5

Principal Evaluation Workshop

9:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Kearney - Holiday Inn

October 6

Principal Evaluation Workshop

9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Omaha - Double Tree

October 6-8

Midwest Regional Middle Level Conference

Omaha - Holiday Inn Convention Center
for more information: www.namle.org

October 11

Paraeducator Conference

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Kearney - Holiday Inn

October 19

Breaking Ranks II Workshop

2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Central Community College - Columbus

October 20

Breaking Ranks II Workshop

2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

University of Nebraska - Kearney

October 21

NARSA Fall Event

4:00 p.m. - depart Kearney

Mac's Creek Vineyard - Lexington

October 23

All Principals Golf Tournament & Fun Day

1:00 p.m.

Kearney - Meadowlark Golf Course

October 24-25

All Principals Conference

Kearney - Holiday Inn

November 3

Breaking Ranks II Workshop

2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Mid-Plains Community College - North Platte

November 9-10

Governor's Summit on Workforce Development

7:30 a.m.

Lincoln - Cornhusker Hotel

for more information:

www.NebraskaWorkforce.com

November 11-12

NASES/NDE Joint Meeting

1:00 p.m.

Lincoln - Cornhusker Hotel

November 15

Assistant Principals Conference

8:30 a.m.

Lincoln - Cornhusker Hotel

November 17-19

NASA/NASB State Convention

Omaha - Holiday Inn

for more information:

www.nebr-schoolboards.org

November 29

NASES Legislative Update

8:00 a.m.

Lincoln - Cornhusker Hotel

November 30

Legislative Preview

8:00 a.m.

Lincoln - Cornhusker Hotel

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



NEBRASKA, SMELL THE COFFEE...TAKE ACTION!

(continued from page 1)

the Cost Quality and Outcomes Study, the federal government's Early Childhood Learning Studies (ECLS and ECLS-K), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Child Care Study, the large scale research by National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (NICHD SECCYD) & the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCELD). And there is ongoing research being conducted by many groups including the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Our Policy Makers Know it:

The National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices is keeping the governors abreast of emerging research in early childhood and is trying to bring issues in this field to the national spotlight. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has developed their own position statement on early childhood and family education and is working with its educators to develop policy based on sound evidence that translates into effective practice in their home states.

Currently there is a national initiative (that involves the NAEYC) to develop a set of indicators that measure a child's well-being (physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and economic) during early years and during the years of transition from early childhood to elementary school called *School Readiness Indicators: Making Progress for Young Children*. This initiative is the result of a funding partnership between several foundations (including the Ewing Marion Kaufman Foundation out of Kansas City) and involves 17 states (not Nebraska). The ultimate purpose of the initiative is to stimulate policy action as a result of the research done in these states. Rhode Island Kids Count has overall manage-

ment of the initiative and has already posted very interesting results of their initial studies. I encourage you to read more at www.gettingready.org.

Under the leadership of Marcia Corr of NDE, Nebraska has begun an Early Childhood Policy Study with high hopes of eventually providing equitable opportunities for high quality pre-k and kindergarten experiences for all children of Nebraska. Currently 60% of kindergarten students in Nebraska attend full-day, every day kindergarten. Ten percent of our four year olds are served in federally funded Head Start programs, and only two percent of our four year olds are served by state-funded ECE programs. Nebraska ranks embarrassingly low among the 50 states in state-funded pre-k programming. But NDE and our state Board of Education have prioritized ECE programming for the state.

The compelling question is posed so eloquently by Lisa Klein, Ph.D., from neighboring Kansas:

"Why is it that this gap remains when we know from over 40 years of research and program evaluation that high quality programs in the earliest years result in cognitive, social, and emotional gains in children, particularly low-income children of color? Why do we tolerate the gap when recent studies by economists examining cost-benefit ratio of early intervention show tremendous payoffs?"

We Need Everyone's Help:

Early learning creates the foundation for later achievement that is sustained into adulthood. Any efforts for improving K-12 education simply cannot succeed without a **collaborative effort** to improve the programs and support for the people entrusted with our youngest children. We must start where we can get the greatest results, serving all children who are most at risk and then widening our circle to include voluntary universal pre-kindergarten (UPK) programming and full expansion of all day/every day kindergarten for all children in Nebraska.

The cynic will instantly ask how this can possibly be done in such economic times. The optimist will solicit, "How do

we, as dedicated educators, seek the collaboration of private and public resources to do what we all know in our hearts needs to be done for the children and the future of Nebraska?"

References

Biggar, H (Ph.D.) and Pizzolongo, P.J. (MS) (2004) School readiness: more than ABCs. *Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children*, 64-66

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NEBRASKA SUPERINTENDENT TURNOVER SURGES

(continued from page 1)

or less tenure at the current post, counting the 2004-2005 year.

The Veterans

The number of superintendents serving 20 or more years in the same Nebraska school district averaged 23 from 1987 to 1996, with a high of 28 in 1991, but that figure has dwindled to a precious few. There are now seven sages in this elite group, including: Russ Hoppner, Hampton (34); Benje Hookstra, Spalding (27); Randall Anderson, Crofton (26); Keith Fagot, Loomis (24); Mike Cuning, Sutherland (23); and Larry Wilbeck, Deshler, and Norm Yoder, Henderson (20).

There are a handful in the 15 to 18 tenure slots – none in year 19 – who may ascend to the 20-year category. They include: Doug Ackles, St. Paul, F. J. Forsberg, Lyons-Decatur, and Dennis Gray, High Plains (18); Craig Pease, Ashland-Greenwood, Dick Stephens, Boone Central, and Nate Stineman, Southern Valley (17); Don Betterman, Plainview, Dave Jones, Oakland-Craig, and Larry Turnquist, Harvard (16); Ed Kasl, Louisville, Doug Nollette, O'Neil, and Dallas Watkins, Dundy County (15).

Will there be another Russ Hoppner?

Yes, I could write another article based just on his peers' reaction to that query. Be that as it may, it is highly unlikely that we will see young, novice superintendents locate in a district like Hampton and remain there for over three decades.

Women Superintendents

The number of Nebraska female superintendents, in public school districts with high schools, continues to inch upward. This fall 16 of Nebraska's 248 (6.5 percent) are women, one more than a year ago, and the most since at least 1951. A 2003 survey by the American Association of School Administrators found that women led 14 percent of the nation's public schools.

Over 75 percent of the three-million teachers in the U. S. are women, and enrollment in, and graduation from, many university educational administration programs indicates that there are as many females who are qualified to be school administrators as there are males. The sheer weight of this demographic data should insure that the number of women superintendents would continue to grow.

Women superintendents in the fall of 2004 include: Virginia Moon, seven years at Ralston; Joyce Huffman, six years at Sumner-Eddyville-Miller; France Blanchard, McPherson County, Gayla Fredrickson, Elgin, and Katherine Meink,

Keya Paha, four years; Cindy Wendell, four years at Arapahoe and two years at Cambridge; Renee Jacobson, Platts-mouth, and Amy Malander, Cedar Rapids, three years; Vicki Caldwell, Newcastle, Cindy Huff, Hitchcock Unified, Joan Reznicek, Red Cloud, and Marlene Uhing, Seward, two years; Susan Gourley, Lincoln, Jamie Isom, Valentine, Lana Sides, Banner County, and Caroline Winchester, Loup City, one year.

Predictions/Trends

In past articles, I have been tempted to make prognostications about the state of the Nebraska superintendency. Many of those predictions, which were not obvious to begin with, did not bear out, even in the short run. For example, most small Nebraska school board members are not enamored with the dual superintendency and, apparently, neither are the practitioners who have served in those positions.

Instead, many school boards are now asking the superintendent to take on the added duties of the principalship, and a few are soliciting candidates who will be content to work as a part-time educational leader. It is obvious that the number of Nebraska school districts will continue to decrease, and I still predict growing numbers in the ranks of female superintendents. 

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH HIGH SCHOOLS: SUPERINTENDENT TURNOVER DATA, FALL 1994 VS. FALL 2004

Item	Fall 1994	Fall 2004
School Districts	289	258
Number Superintendents	283	248
Median Tenure in Position	4.50 yrs.	3.83 yrs.
Average Tenure in Position	7.48 yrs.	6.12 yrs.
Superintendents w/ 1-Year Tenure	45	46
Percent Turnover	15.6	17.8
Supts. w/20+ Yrs. Tenure	25	7
Women Superintendents	4	16



Charting STARS...

(continued from page 2)

[We have spoken with community members and school board members as well, but our focus has always been on educators.] We have visited schools of various sizes serving different kinds of communities across the state. It is impossible, of course, to capture the complexity of what we have learned in this short space, but I can offer you some observations of trends over the past three years:

❖ Nebraska schools remain at various stages of developing viable standards, assessment, and accountability (SAA) processes. Most of the schools we have visited are making significant progress, but a sizable minority are not.

❖ Among the schools making significant progress, we observe the following: a broadly-shared understanding of the uses of assessment data to inform curriculum and instruction (for the purposes of school improvement [in other words, a systematic approach to SAA]; broad “buy-in” among staff; a shared leadership model, typically employing teams (but with strong facilitation from one or two passionate leaders); meaningful, embedded professional development opportunities (as opposed to a series of unrelated, one-shot workshops run by external agencies); a variety of productive collaborations among teachers; and above all, a commitment to local needs and interests first.

❖ Among the schools making little or no progress, we observe the following: little understanding of the uses of assessment or how it connects to curriculum, instruction, and school improvement; resistance or resignation among the staff; either centralized, authoritarian leadership or diffuse, weak leadership; fragmentation or isolation among teachers; haphazard or nonexistent professional development opportunities; and a focus on compliance when it comes to SAA.

❖ Although a majority of schools have made some progress on developing a viable SAA process, stubborn challenges remain and new challenges continue to emerge. Among the challenges most often cited by teachers and administrators in interviews and on surveys are the following: finding time to meet the myriad

demands placed on them; developing the capacity – for instance, the assessment literacy needed to interpret and use data for school improvement; continuing resistance toward and lack of understanding of STARS among some educators who would prefer a simpler, less demanding system; and dealing with federal accountability requirements and resultant media rankings on top of state requirements.

❖ Perhaps the most powerful shift we have witnessed over three years has been in the conversations in Nebraska schools. On a basic level, the language used by Nebraska educators has changed. We have witnessed enormous growth in assessment literacy, especially among teachers, many of whom now comfortably “talk assessment.” But also, we believe the question that Nebraska educators ask about STARS has shifted from “Why do we have to do this?” to “Can it work?” to “How can we make it work for us?” To be sure, some educators are asking new questions out of resignation; they understand that whether they like it or not, STARS is here to stay. But more and more educators are asking new questions because they have come to believe that Nebraska’s local responsibility model is the right thing to do for Nebraska schools, communities, and children.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

In each of our annual reports, we have made specific recommendations to

the Nebraska Department of Education and State School Board. But we have also written the reports with Nebraska educators in mind, giving voice wherever possible to the articulate and insightful teachers and administrators we visited. I hope you have a chance to read at least portions of our reports in order to listen to and learn from these fine educators.

For my part, as I look back over our three years of research, it is clear to me that Nebraska schools and the Nebraska Department of Education have become increasingly sophisticated in their SAA policies, practices, and processes. They are, on the whole, well-positioned to capitalize on the strengths of their systems (local and state) and to respond effectively to the challenges they face. Make no mistake: the journey will continue to be rough at times. As we point out in our reports, both the NDE and schools have a long way to go. But as many observers on the national scene cast their eyes to Nebraska’s STARS, there is reason for hope that this newly charted territory will turn out to be, if not the promised land, at least a promising place to be.

Note: The author welcomes comments and questions about the CEP and its findings at cgallagher2@unl.edu. In the next issue of this newsletter, Pat Roschewski, Coordinator of Statewide Assessment, will respond to this article.



WHAT TEENS THINK OF SCHOOL

Quick! What three words do teens think of first when asked how they feel about school? “Bored” and “tired” were the top choices in a recent survey by the Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing. Lucky for education, “happy” and “challenged” tied for third. But high schools should note that older kids (aged 16 and 17) were more likely than those aged 13 to 15 to express the negative feelings of boredom, tiredness, pressure, and confusion at school.

Visit Education Vital Signs 2004, www.asbj.com/evs for more facts and figures on school and society.

Bored 50%
Tired 42%
Happy 31%
Challenged 31%
Pressured 28%
Interested 22%
Confused 21%
Encouraged 16%
Excited 16%
Supported 13%
Lonely 13%
Appreciated 8%
Angry 7%
Afraid 1%

American School Board Journal/
August 2004



READING NOW AND THEN

(continued from page 5)

heard the teacher starting the day out saying "We are dedicating this week to the letter OE OE H!" The children brought things to school every day that week that started with the letter H. One phonogram a week!

Other teachers want to teach one phonogram a day.

In my summer school Oma and I taught the children to say, write, and read four phonograms a day with a few days for review. They learned the first 54 phonograms in three or four weeks. Teaching four a day got the children really excited about learning to write and read!

In the regular school year children who are using the code to sound out and spell words by Halloween are usually reading and writing by Christmas. By the end of the year, they are memorizing classic quality poems, reading lovely stories, and expanding their vocabularies and understanding. In their third year, having been well taught to write and read, they are on their way to becoming well educated. Hallelujah!

I need to clear up one more thing. All my children read well and read a lot. Their trouble was with writing, not reading. Today the

two older ones write legibly enough. The youngest one, though, had such terrible penmanship that he couldn't read his own writing and finally took a course in printing in engineering school. He now prints clearly and fast. He is working at NYU on a master's degree in linguistics and studying statistics as well. He is very excited about statistics, is working on a program to teach foreign languages in a short time on the computer. He has studied Greek and Spanish and is now learning Polish.

He always read pages whole, it seemed to me, he read so fast! But he was home last week and told me that he now writes down everything he reads on file cards. What he writes down, he says, he knows. He doesn't even keep his notes. "It is the writing that makes the difference!" He teaches English as a Second Language and tells me that people who learn a foreign language very seldom write it.

The best thing of all about the Spalding Method is the penmanship. Spalding teaches penmanship wonderfully, usually in the first few weeks of school. And Nebraska Reading First is doing that!

For seven years Oma Riggs successfully taught children who had been brought in off the streets of New York City's Spanish Harlem. She taught them to write, read and spell English in a year or two. Oma helped Myrna McCulloch start a program at St. Agnes School, in South Omaha in 1997. In its first year her school was such a success that people brought their children from the posh areas of West Omaha to school there. And they learned to write, spell and read there, along with simple grammar, in two years.

Today I believe that my three children started out trying to read with both sides of their brains. I read now that maybe a third of children do that. I believe especially these children need to get both sides of their brains, along with eyes, voice and hands, lined up and working together from the beginning. Before they are asked to read words. More and more I realize how much helpful information Dr. Orton's phonogram code provides people of any age who are learning to write and read. 🗣️

WHY WE DON'T HEAR OTHERS

If you want to listen so you really hear what others say, make sure you're not a:

Mindreader: You'll hear little or nothing as you think "What is this person really thinking or feeling?"

Rehearser: Your mental tryouts for "Here's what I'll say next" tune out the speaker.

Filterer: Some call this selective listening - hearing only what you want to hear.

Dreamer: Drifting off during a face-to-face conversation can lead to an embarrassing "What did you say?" or "Could you repeat that?"

Identifier: If you refer everything you hear to your experience, you probably didn't really hear what was said.

Comparer: When you get sidetracked assessing the messenger, you're sure to miss the message.

Derailer: Changing the subject too quickly tells others you're not interested in anything they have to say.

Sparrer: You hear what's said but quickly belittle it or discount it. That puts you in the same class as the derailer.

Placater: Agreeing with everything you hear just to be nice or to avoid conflict does not mean that you're a good listener.

Source: The Writing Lab, Purdue University Press

Book Review...

How Full is Your Bucket?

(continued on page 7)

an educator. The key to bucket filling is: "recognition is most appreciated and effective when it is individualized, specific, and deserved."

If you have visited Gallup, you have observed the "Dipper and the Bucket" theory in practice as you will note what looks like a large raindrop displayed by employees at their work stations. At the top of the drop it says, "A Drop For Your Bucket" and then a handwritten message of something the person has done that merits adding to the recipients bucket at the bottom with a date and signature of the person who sent it. Positivism in action and it works!

Dr. Clifton is no longer with us, but the "Dipper and Bucket" theory will live as a lasting legacy. At the back of the book you will find a removable packet which contains five drops for your bucket. May your bucket always be full! 🗣️



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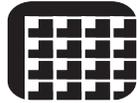
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Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

5	Principal Evaluation Workshop	9:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
6	Principal Evaluation Workshop	9:00 a.m.	Double Tree	Omaha
6-8	Middle Level Conference	1:00 p.m.	Holiday Inn	Omaha
11	Paraeducators Conference	8:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
13	NASA Region III	9:00 a.m.	Northeast Community College	Norfolk
13	NASA Region IV	10:00 a.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
13	NASA Region V	12:00 noon	Country Kitchen	Ogallala
15	NASES Region III	12:00 noon	Sports Denn	Norfolk
18	NAESP Region II	8:30 a.m.	UNO - Milo Bales Center	Omaha
19	NSASSP Region IV	1:00 p.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
19	Breaking Ranks II Workshop	2:00 p.m.	Central Community College	Columbus
20	NCSA Executive Board	9:00 a.m.	NCSA Offices	Lincoln
20	Breaking Ranks II Workshop	2:00 p.m.	UNK - Ockinga Conf. Centr	Kearney
20	NAESP Region I	11:00 a.m.	Malcolm Elementary	Malcolm
20	NASA Region I	4:00 p.m.	Evening with Friends	Milligan
21	NARSA Fall Event	4:00 p.m.	Mac's Creek Vineyards	Lexington
21	NASA Region II	1:30 p.m.	Elkhorn Admin. Office	Elkhorn
23	All Principals Golf/FunDay	1:00 p.m.	Meadowlark Hills	Kearney
23-25	All Principals Conference	11:30 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
28	NASES Region IV	12:00 noon	ESU #10	Kearney

NOVEMBER

3	Breaking Ranks II Workshop	2:00 p.m.	Mid-Plains Comm. College	North Platte
3	NAESP Region III	2:00 p.m.	Wayne State College	Wayne
4	NASES Region V	9:00 a.m.	Perkins	Sidney
5	NAESP Region I	12:00 noon	Chances R	York
9	NSASSP Region II	5:30 p.m.	German American Society	Omaha
10	NASA Region V	12:00 noon	Country Club	Alliance
10	NSASSP Region III	2:00 p.m.	ESU #8	Neligh
10	NSASSP Region I	5:30 p.m.	Country Club	Seward
11-12	NASES/NDE Joint Meeting	1:00 p.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
17-19	NASA/NASB State Convention	10:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Omaha
17	NASA Executive Board	12:00 noon	Holiday Inn	Omaha
19	NASA General Membership	9:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Omaha
19	NAESP Region IV	8:45 a.m.	UNK	Kearney
29	NASES Legislative Update	8:00 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
30	Legislative Preview	8:00 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

February 10-12 - ASBO Leadership Conference - Boston, MA
 February 17-20 - AASA National Convention - San Antonio, TX
 February 25-28 - NASSP National Convention - San Francisco, CA
 April 15-19 - NAESP National Convention - Baltimore, MD

The NAESP Link

The State Association Newsletter for Elementary School Principals
October, 2004



Building Strong Relationships and Strong Schools Through Teacher Appraisal

There are several good reasons teachers and administrators participate in the teacher appraisal process each year. The public has a right to know there are qualified personnel in the classroom providing quality instruction using research based methods in the instructional process. Staff development is a key component of the appraisal process as well. As professionals all staff have a need to grow and continue growing each year so we can best facilitate for our students. All staff need to see themselves as life-long-learners and professionals who are always looking for a better way to reach children and help children grow. As professionals we must always remember that what we do is ultimately about student outcomes and student growth. We must resist the temptation to focus on ourselves and think that the process of staff appraisal or schools in general are about the people who work in them. They are always about the kids who are there to learn.

Trust is one key factor in the appraisal process. As administrators we must develop strong relationships with all staff members so open conversations can occur regarding student learning and instructional practices used in the classroom. Build up the idea within your staff that the process of staff appraisal is about making school a better place for kids and student learning. Build up the idea that the staff appraisal process is about giving teachers tools to make school as positive a place for kids as possible. Staff appraisal should not be a, "Gottcha," process, it should be one more process where people work together to make education better for children.

Think about the staff development component of your local staff appraisal process. If this is an area that is lacking in your district's local process you may want to take some time to plan for how you can make this a more meaningful process for your staff and students. Never forget though that the strength of the process begins with the positive relationships you as the building administrator foster with your instructional staff.

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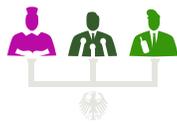
Region Notes

Region I officers are meeting on Oct. 20th in Malcolm at 11:00. The Fall Social will be in York at Chances "R" at 11:30 on Nov. 5th. We are looking forward to seeing you! rpage@esu6.org

The first **Region IV** meeting was held on September 8th at noon in the Grand Island Public Schools Administration Building. Senator Vicki McDonald graciously accepted to visit our meeting and talk about the legislative process and upcoming issues. Dawna Sigurdson presented "An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the Central Region Autism Team". Both speakers were excellent and the information they brought to our group was outstanding!!

The Youth Leadership Conference will be held on November 19th at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Mary Kay Mueller, renowned motivational speaker, will be enlightening our student leaders in the morning with leadership issues and she will also speak to the principals and sponsors in the afternoon. She is very excited to be coming to present to our group!

The last two meetings of the year will be held on January 19th at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Mike Dulaney will be our guest speaker and will be focusing on the retirement issues and kindergarten entry age. Andrew Heady's house in Hastings will be the finale meeting on April 27th. We hope to see everyone there!! jcleveg@esu10.org



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