

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNERS



Oxley

Gary Oxley, retired Superintendent of Tri-County Public Schools was presented NCSA's highest award, The Distinguished Service Award at Administrators' Days. Jim Rose, Principal at Fillmore Central, presented the award.

Oxley began his career as teacher and head coach at Creighton Community Schools and then Louisville from 1965 to 1972. In 1972 Gary began his career as Principal at Johnson Brock Public Schools. In 1976, Gary became Superintendent at Nemaha Valley where he stayed until 1990. From 1990 to 2003 Gary was the Superintendent at Tri-County Schools.

Gary's nomination highlighted his achievements at the local and state level to include: Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association's Superintendent of the Year, Past Legislative Chairman of NRCSA, Past Chairman of Southeast Nebraska Distance Learning Consortium, Leader of Technology advancements at Tri-County among many other awards and honors.

When asked to comment on receiving his award, Oxley states, "I was taken by surprise and deeply honored at being selected, there are many many hard working Administrators throughout the state, and we have a great educational system in our state given our limited resources. . . . In looking back at the amount of mentorship and leadership that we receive as educators from our fellow administrators by our various organizations NCSA, NASB, that is what makes our educational system as strong and effective as it is today. We have up-to-date administrators and up-to-date information."



O'Hanlon

James O'Hanlon, Dean, Teachers College, was the second recipient to be presented NCSA's highest award, The Distinguished Service Award. Jody Isernhagen, Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska, presented the award.

James O'Hanlon received his B.A. from the University of Nebraska, his M.A. from Ohio State University and his Ed.D. in Educational Psychology and Secondary Education from the University of Nebraska. He has served as the Dean of the Teachers College at the University of Nebraska since 1982. His professional positions include a secondary school teacher, an assistant Principal, a Professor, and an Associate Vice Chancellor.

Larry Dlugosh, Professor at the University of Nebraska states, "Dean O'Hanlon's legacy will be that he cared deeply about providing motivated and high quality teachers and school administrators for the schools of Nebraska, the state, and the nation. Under his guidance, the College was among the first in the nation to embrace the possibilities of providing on-line instruction for students across the nation and around the world."

When asked to comment on receiving this award, Dr. O'Hanlon states, "I have always treasured my relationship with NCSA and appreciate all it does to advance the schools in the state, so this award has special meaning to me." 🗣️

BACK TO SCHOOL

by Glen L. Beran, Superintendent, Imperial Grade/Chase County High School, and Chair NCSA Executive Board



Beran

The excitement of beginning another year is underway. Did your school opening include the preparation and sending of the additional notices required by No Child Left Behind?

How about adopting or amending a Parental Involvement Policy? Did you amend your Gun-Free Schools Policy? What about those student fees? Are you ready to certify by October 1st that the school does not deny participation in constitutionally permitted prayer? Oh, no, not another form.

Yes, school has started and it would seem that all of our work is complete in regard with compliance issues to accommodate parents and students. Don't sit back and relax, we still have

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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.



LEADERS FOR LEARNING

By Pat Roschewski, Coordinator of Statewide Assessment, Nebr. Dept. of Education

The roles of administrators in Nebraska and across the nation have changed. Never before have our leadership priorities been as clearly defined. We are focused on student learning and the appropriate and accurate measurement of that learning. The priority focus on assessment results has shown us that quality assessment data can and should inform instruction in classrooms. This new emphasis on student performance has challenged us to become "Leaders for Learning" in our school districts.

Nebraska administrators have had unique opportunities to provide the needed local leadership for learning. Nebraska is the only state where assessment legislation honors educators and trusts the professional judgment of its teachers and administrators. The opportunity to make local decisions about whether or not our students are meeting standards has

brought with it the responsibilities of developing quality local assessment systems, of ensuring the data collected in those local assessment systems are accurate, and of using the data to inform quality instructional practice in our classrooms. These responsibilities have further reinforced the need for us to become "Leaders for Learning."

As a former classroom teacher, a district administrator, and now facilitator of the statewide assessment process, I have had many opportunities to see the local assessment building process through different lenses. I have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly. Building local assessment systems, I have learned, is NOT about testing; we must move beyond that mistaken notion. If we don't, we run the risk of allowing ourselves to be "hung up" in the assessment tree - and miss the forest - the real reason we have been

developing local assessment systems in our districts. Building a local assessment system is about appropriate opportunities for students to meet learning targets (standards), the validation of teachers' professional judgment through those opportunities (assessment), and the use of assessment information for making a difference for kids in classrooms (accountability). The School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System is about teaching, learning, and system-wide school improvement.

Much information about the assessment practices in Nebraska school districts has been gathered in the state during the last three years. This research has been collected from large and from small schools. This information came from every corner of the state and includes formal and informal interviews with teachers and administrators, surveys, focus groups, correspondence, and observations. Based upon this information, it is now possible to identify successful practices, processes and strategies that build high quality assessment systems and practices that are less than successful, in fact, practices that are detrimental to school districts and the students in those districts. In every case where districts have implemented the promising practices successfully, the leaders in those districts modeled, lived, and believed that they were, are, and continue to be "Leaders for Learning."

The Six Promising Practices found in Nebraska school districts where high quality local assessment systems have been developed are described below. There is no priority order to the listing of the six practices because each is important. In some districts all six practices have been implemented. In some districts more successful practices are found than in others; in some districts no evidence of the named successful practices was evident. Each practice looks different in individual districts, was initiated and was implemented in a fashion appropriate to the size and circumstance of the individual district. However, in every case these promising practices for building local assessment were initiated, led, and/or supported by Nebraska's "Leaders for Learning."

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P E R S P E C T I V E S

by Jerry Sellentin, Ph.D., Executive Director



Sellentin

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

The story is told of Sherlock Holmes, a private investigator, and his friend, Mr. Watson, going on an overnight camping trip. After setting up their tent, fixing a meal over the campfire and visiting about recent cases, they retired to their sleeping bags in the tent. During the night, Sherlock Holmes, was awakened and said to Mr. Watson, "What do you see?" Mr. Watson replied, "I see the sky." "No, Mr. Watson, What do you see?" Mr. Watson replied, "I see the stars." "No, Mr. Watson. What do you see?" Mr. Watson replied, "I have told you what I see, what do you see?"

Sherlock replied, "Mr. Watson, someone has stolen our tent." As administrators, do we see and focus on what is important for student achievement?

With the start of a new school year, will you focus on our Administrators' Days keynote speaker, Paul Houston's, challenge to "Give wings to children's dreams?" The challenges will be tough with the need for more funding and concerns about how funding should be distributed. When our nation decided to go to war with Iraq we said as a nation we would finance it. When we talk about funding education we don't fully fund it. Consider IDEA. It was promised to be funded at forty percent and today it's funded about nineteen percent. What about the State of Nebraska's priorities for financing education compared to roads, corrections, and economic development? The challenge of No Child Left Behind legislation, with standards, assessment, and accountability as it relates to educating the whole child and student achievement will require you to be a "Leader of Learning."

Yes, as Administrators we are going to be challenged, but we signed up for the challenge to take care of the children and help them be successful. David J. Sperry, Dean, College of Education,

University of Utah in the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals magazine, "IMPACT," suggests to school administrators to: 1) survive more effectively; 2) engender greater public support for public schools; and 3) more fully meet the needs of children. To accomplish the above goals Dean Sperry suggests :

- 1) Be more personally concerned about, committed to and accountable for student performance and achievement.
- 2) Better understand and use data in diagnosing and developing instructional programs that will assure student learning.
- 3) Pay greater personal attention to instructional practices in your school district.
- 4) Be more savvy and pro-active in the recruitment of teachers.
- 5) Be the architects of cultural change within your schools.

6) Engage in greater collaboration and coalition building.

7) Adopt an open and honest communication approach.

8) Become politically aware and active.

9) Don't forsake the broader well being of the whole child while pursuing the goals of accountability.

10) Be more receptive to innovative and experimental ways of organizing and administering programs.

11) Don't lose passion for the job.

2002-03 NCSA Annual Report: As an NCSA member, YOU have made 2002-03 a banner year. Please let us know if you have areas where you think we can still improve. We want to have an even better year in 2003-04 and with your involvement, we can.

Have an outstanding school year and take care of yourself.

NCSA EXECUTIVE BOARD JULY 2003 MEETING

The NCSA Executive Board met in Kearney on July 29 and discussed the following items:

- 1) Gates Grant: 296 superintendents and principals are registered for the final year of the Gates grant. When year three is completed, 80 percent of all Nebraska superintendents and principals will have participated.
- 2) Legal Support: The Board approved changes to the current plan to include calling the program Legal Support instead of Legal Defense. The program will also provide non-legal support by retired and active superintendents and principals who have completed a training program in working with administrators who request legal support assistance.
- 3) Leadership Institute: 24 administrators have been selected to participate in the Nebraska Educational Leadership Institute. The first session

will be held at Gallup's new University facility in Omaha on November 13 & 14.

4) Affiliate Budget Support: A task force was appointed to review and submit recommendations on current practices for affiliate expenses.

5) Budget: The 2003-04 Budget of \$784,030 was approved. This compares to 2002-03 Budget of \$775,967.

6) Annual Report: The Annual Report for 2002-03 was reviewed.

7) OPS, Grand Island, South Sioux City, Lexington, Lawsuit: Motion was made and passed that NCSA takes no position on the lawsuit at this time.

8) Evaluation: An evaluation was conducted by the Board on its practices and procedures during the past year.

9) A presentation was given by Mike Dulaney on the "History of Nebraska Public School Finance."

10) Reports were given by officers, affiliate presidents and staff.



IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING – ANOTHER VIEW*

by Dan DePasquale, Ed. D, Associate Superintendent – Instruction & Personnel, Norfolk Public Schools

Educators in Nebraska are at a crossroads in the area of school improvement. With the STARS assessments of reading and mathematics expanding to add science and social studies and the implementation of the No Child Left Behind (N.C.L.B.) testing mandates, it is apparent that there exists a time and task overload in meeting the mandates. Also, the emphasis on testing has created puzzlement, and a bewilderment affecting the meaning of educational reform and school improvement. There is much to be accomplished by Nebraska administrators and teachers in a very short period of time. How to accomplish the mandated task and improve student learning seems to be a confusing and perplexing undertaking. The strategic planning model to guide change has been the norm, however many respected educators are questioning the value of schools using the strategic planning model for school improvement when educators are already on overload.

Michael Fullan (1999) notes that the comprehensive/strategic reform process "...adds insult to injury...complex implementation plans themselves become another source of confusion and burden." Gary Hamel, Harvard Business School adds a little more flavor by saying, "Strategic planning is about as effective as dancing naked around a campfire" (2000). If educators in Nebraska are at a crossroads in the area of school improvement and if the traditional pathways of school improvement - strategic planning, add to the confusion and sap valuable energy and time perhaps another path should be considered. The "other" path for meaningful improvement of learning centers around four basic strategies that are linked together. The strategies for improvement of learning are 1) Data Driven, 2) Short-Term Results, 3) Goal Oriented and 4) Research and Development. The absence of any one component will be a major roadblock to success in student achievement. A discussion of these strategies will show that they are realistic and lead to meaningful improvement of learning.

1. Data Driven

It is clearly understood that we need data to improve instructional practices and to select appropriate instructional targets. Data also allows educators to evaluate and monitor student progress. A number of school districts have participated in Data Retreats. These retreats involve a process of examining test data in an organized and non-statistical process. The results allow teachers to identify patterns of where schools have been successful and have failed in the area of academic achievement. Mike Schmoker (2001) notes, "Group data maximize our ability to develop the most effective improvement and corrective action and to focus that action on the highest-priority areas, those with the greatest opportunity for helping the greatest number of students."

2. Short-Term Results

Gary Hamel sums it up when he says, "Win small, win early, win often." Small and immediate improvements are what is important. Teachers need to see the impact of what they are doing and the impact does not need to be dramatic. Achieving short-term goals energizes the school improvement process. Constant and incremental improvements are the building blocks of improvement of learning.

3. Goal Oriented

Simply put, goals lead to success. Without clearly understood common goals improvement of learning will not occur. Goals provide criteria for decisions, allow districts to determine the degree of success, and allows for collaboration. While the successful accomplishment of goals is more likely when the goal setting process is linked with teamwork and collaboration there is a pit-fall that must be avoided. All too often the emphasis is on collaboration and not clearly defined goals. It needs to be understood that collaboration in itself does not lead to increased student achievement. There should not be more than three goals and the growth expected must be achievable. Goals that are

valuable have the following characteristics:

1. Clean and simple (direct language understood by all)
2. Measurable
3. Focused on student achievement
4. Linked with STARS results or norm referenced assessment

An Example of a goal is as follows: We will improve "Acquires an Advanced Reading Vocabulary" from 65 percent to 71 percent. During the next four to six weeks lessons and strategies would be implemented to produce the results. This example is clear, simple, measurable, focused on student achievement and linked to STARS.

4. Research and Development

One of the exciting aspects of being in education at this time is the research base that has been developed about effective teaching. Robert J. Marzano (2001), et. al. has noted "...we now have more than 30 years of accumulated research that provides some highly consistent answers to the question of what types of instructional strategies work best to improve student achievement." School districts must now put into place the opportunity for teachers and administrators to conduct research and development. Action research projects, conducted by school teams, are an ideal format for conducting research and development. It is important that the teams focus on short-term results. An example of this are the K-3 teams formed in all Norfolk Elementary Schools. These teams meet twice per month for one and one-half hour to discuss a variety of primary reading assessments teachers have piloted in their classrooms. After using the assessments teachers meet to discuss the pros and cons of each assessment. Based on the results of the "research and development" this past year, the school district will have a recommended list of assessments that can be used to assess various reading skills. Additionally, the school district will consider using Team Learning Logs this coming year to formalize the process.





Linchpins, “True” North, and the National Network for Educational Renewal: An Interesting Combination – Read On!

by Mike Moody, Superintendent, Wakefield Community Schools

As I toil away at this NCSA project, I am just beginning my 28th year as a professional educator—the last twelve of which have been in school administration. Through these many years I have had the opportunity to see the proverbial pendulum swing more than once. Obviously, education has never been an exact science and we have all done our best to adjust, adapt and otherwise modify our approach to schooling in an imprecise professional world. Speaking for most of the colleagues I have come to know over the years, I'd say our efforts have been made admirably, and in a conscious attempt to keep pace with the dramatic and rapid changes in the social, psychological, and emotional needs of our students. As we attended to the immediacy of those needs with good faith effort, we seem to have lost sight of an educational end point, and this has left us at the mercy of the swinging pendulum and the directionlessness it creates. It seems we lack a “True” North— a unifying direction.

I attribute much of our difficulties to the release *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. This infamous document, replete with its lies and distortions, spawned a tidal wave of “blue-ribbon” reports, educational summits, political/legislative affronts, and more reform initiatives than any one profession could conceivably be expected to manage. The net effect has been that many (most?) educational leaders today find themselves overwhelmed, frustrated, and confused. We find ourselves facing what appears to be “educational chaos” with little professional clarity about what is important or in some cases, even germane. In my estimation we are losing professional focus and direction. We have no True North. And we lack, as well, a linchpin (defined as a central cohesive source of support and stability) or groundedness that enables us to make professional decisions that will truly lead north.

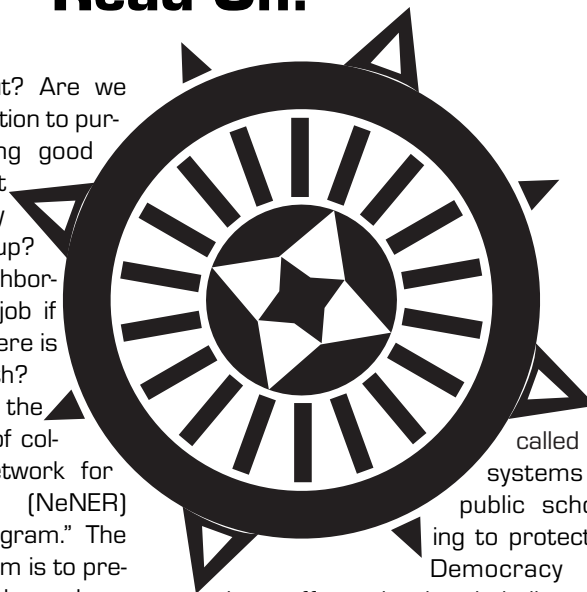
After 28 years I'm still asking myself,

what is this business about? Are we preparing the youth of the nation to pursue private aims by getting good jobs? Or is there more to it than that? Have I done my job if district test scores go up? Has my counterparts in neighboring districts done a better job if their scores are higher? Where is my focus? Which way is north?

This past school year I had the opportunity to join a group of colleagues in a Nebraska Network for Educational Renewal (NeNER) “Leadership Associates Program.” The goal of the leadership program is to prepare school personnel, teacher educators, and college arts and sciences faculty to provide leadership at their individual sites and for the state as a whole in the simultaneous renewal of PK-12 schools and the education of educators. This organization, inspired by the work of John Goodlad, has an uncompromising agenda. Put simply, it seeks to help inservice and preservice teachers find True North—a professional direction—by establishing a groundedness or linchpin that can guide curricular and instructional decisions.


The leadership program was one of the most intellectually challenging, but professionally rewarding experiences of my career. I learned that teaching and learning are profoundly human endeavors, not technical ones. All of our professional decisions as educators have an impact on the lives of others—meaning they can be judged on a moral basis. The NNER agenda squarely rests on what we believe are the four most pivotal moral dimensions of teaching:

- Enculturating the young into a social and political democracy,
 - Providing all students with access to knowledge,
 - Teaching students with a nurturing pedagogy, and
 - Serving as stewards of schools.
- Democracy is fragile. Our founders



called for systems of public schooling to protect it. Democracy is the stuff people give their lives for, and it requires schools that provide access to knowledge for all, something that takes teachers capable of administering a nurturing pedagogy, one defined by sincere care and concern. And finally, the agenda behooves us to serve as moral steward of our schools—deporting ourselves in ways that affect the “feel” of the place—in the interest of maximizing the positive growth and development of our youth.

I'd like to urge all of my administrative colleagues to look for opportunities to participate in initiatives sponsored by NNER and the Nebraska affiliate, NeNER. Watch for them. And if another NeNER leadership program comes around, jump at the chance to get involved and to get your teachers involved. You won't regret it.

*With great appreciation to Paul Theobald, Dean of the College of Education and Counseling, Wayne State College for his guidance, and encouragement, and also for providing an excellent compass. 



CONGRATULATIONS TO...

☞ **Bennington Public Schools**, on passing a \$15.9 million dollar bond issue

☞ **Wilber Clatonia Public Schools** on passing two bond issues, \$5.9 million for a new elementary school and \$250,000 for a new track and athletic facilities

☞ **Southeast Consolidated Schools** on the success of their over ride election

☞ **Connie Eichhorn**, Principal, Omaha Burke High School, who has received the "Women of Vision" Award from the Omaha Y.W.C. A.

☞ **Doug Christensen**, Nebraska Commissioner of Education, who has been named Public Official of the Year by the "Governing" magazine,

☞ **Ray Otero**, Assistant Principal, Lexington High School, who has been named Nebraska Hispanic Man of the Year

☞ **Brian Maher**, Superintendent of Centennial Public Schools, who has been named to the Nebraska School Activities Board of Control

☞ **Mike Wortman**, Principal, Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln High School, who has been elected President, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Teachers College Alumni Association

☞ **Polly Feis**, Deputy Commissioner, Nebraska Department of Education, who has received the 2003 "Award of

Excellence" from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Teachers College Alumni Association

☞ **Kirby Eltiste**, Assistant Superintendent, Millard Public Schools, who has been appointed by the Governor to the Public Practices Commission

☞ **Terry Haack**, Principal, Elkhorn High School on receiving his Doctoral Degree

☞ **Bess Jenkins**, Principal, Goodrich Middle School, whose 7th grade science class won the national award in the "Healthy Schools, Healthy People, It's a Snap" competition

☞ **Ralph Thorpe**, retired Elementary Principal from Lincoln Public Schools, who has received the 2003 "Service to Mankind Award" from the Lincoln Center Sertoma Club

☞ **Wes Lauterbach**, retired Lincoln Southeast High School Principal, who is celebrating fifty years of marriage

☞ **Ron Joekel**, retired from UNL Teachers College, who is celebrating fifty years of marriage

☞ **John Christensen**, Dean UNO College of Education, who has been named Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs

☞ **John Langan**, Chairman UNO Teacher Evaluation Department, who has been named Interim Dean of UNO College of Education

☞ **Beverly Peterson**, State Board of

Education, who has been elected to the Board of Directors of the National Association of State Boards of Education

RETIREMENTS

☞ **Phil Schoo**, Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools, July 1, 2004

SYMPATHY

☞ Family of **Don Anderson**, Nebraska Department of Education

☞ Family of **Rod Smith**, Retired Assistant Administrator, ESU 11

☞ Family of **Duane Synoground**, Superintendent, Arthur Public Schools

☞ **Don Merchant**, Superintendent McCook Public Schools, on the death of his Son

☞ **Brian Maher**, Superintendent, Centennial Public Schools, on the death of his Father

☞ **Barbara Hopkins**, Director, Lincoln Public Schools on the death of her Brother

☞ **Don Day**, Principal, Table Rock High School, on the death of his Father

☞ **Tony Simmons**, Principal, Crofton Community Schools, on the death of his Brother in law

☞ **Kelly Coash-Johnson**, NCSA Director Training/Development, on the death of her Grandmother

"SHOW ME AND I UNDERSTAND"

Presented by: Dr. Jan Norris, LSU

Tell me and I know; show me and I understand. Success is possible for children with language disorders, dyslexia, ADHD, or auditory processing deficits who struggle in the classroom with oral and written language. This workshop will show, tell, model, and explain useful programs, picture tools, and therapy techniques that visualize and make difficult abstract concepts concrete and comprehensible. Explorations will include phonemic awareness, print awareness, phonics, vocabulary, sight words, syntax, spelling, punctuation, math, and much more!

Friday, October 10, 2003 • 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Kearney Ramada Inn • \$50 (includes lunch and material)

Visit: nslha.org For Registration Information



GOVERNOR'S SUMMIT ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TO FOCUS ON PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The 4th Annual Governor's Summit on Workforce Development will take place October 7-8 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln. This year's theme is "Partnerships United for a Competitive Workforce."

The Summit will feature keynote speakers known worldwide for their efforts in the area of workforce development. Confirmed speakers for the Summit are Dr. Will Daggett, Robert Jones, and Dr. Mary Pipher.

Will Daggett is founder and president of the International Center for Leadership in Education. He is known worldwide for his efforts to move the education system toward more rigorous

and relevant skills and knowledge for all students. His presentation provides vivid examples of what students will need to know to succeed in this changing world.

Robert Jones is president and CEO of the National Alliance of Business. He is a nationally recognized expert in the workforce development field. Jones is a life-long advocate for investing in people.

Mary Pipher, is a Lincoln resident and author of a number of books, including "Reviving Ophelia" which was a New York Times best-seller for 154 weeks. Her work combines her training in both the fields of psychology and anthropology. She has a special interest in how American culture affects the mental

health of its people.

Along with keynote speakers, the Summit will also offer breakout sessions, many of which will showcase real examples of "best partnership practices" that are taking place in Nebraska.

The Governor's Summit will be a one and a half day event. In addition to scheduled keynotes and breakout session speakers, Congressman Tom Osborne has been invited to speak at the event.

For more information on the Governor's Summit or to register, visit the Nebraska Workforce Development website at www.NebraskaWorkforce.com and click on the Summit icon.

FOR SALE...

Northwest High School in Grand Island has a walk-in cooler/freezer combination for sale due to remodeling. Please contact Bill Mowinkel or Jim Glines for more information 308-385-6398

NSDLAF+ NOTES #11

The early 1980's were difficult economic times in Nebraska and may seem irrelevant to some today as we consider investment interest rates at a historic low. Today the investments of governmental subdivisions, pension accounts and private individuals are a constant source of concern and in some cases continue to affect a variety of planning activities. Of course, current lending rates and especially home mortgages have become a "buyers market" as customers line up to take advantage of the times. By contrast, in the 1980's investments with rates in excess of fifteen percent (15%) were common, and cash became an extremely valuable commodity. At the same time, however, the rates to borrow funds escalated until many commercial loans were only available with rates in excess of twenty percent (20%). The seven percent (7%) lid on governments seemed as regressive then as the current levy and expenditure restrictions of today.

The Nebraska School District Liquid Fund (NSDLAF) was created in 1988 by an interlocal agreement among school districts, educational service units and community colleges. The major purpose

of those involved was to provide an additional fiscal management tool. NSDLAF became a vehicle enabling these governmental units to gain professional investment help and make use of a variety of liquid and fixed investment vehicles. NSDLAF continues today as a success story of cooperation among educational units. During peak investment months in excess of \$200,000,000 is being entrusted to the Nebraska School District Liquid Fund and the investment assistance from Ambac Securities, Inc., the Fund's selected marketing and investment advisor.

Reflecting upon the history of other times only teaches us that monetary cycles will always occur. Nebraska is not immune to global events and rain does not fall proportionally on each of the State's counties. Managing public funds, however, must be a trust and should deserve the most professional resources available.

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



FYI

You can now download the **NCSA Today!**

www.ncsa.org



NEBRASKA PRINCIPALS CALL ON CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Scott Dodson, Woodland Elementary, Norfolk; Katie Mathews, Park Elementary, Kearney; Steve Wilson, Centura Elementary; Dave Ludwig, Wisner-Pilger Elementary; Lynn Johnson, Arlington High School; Lynn Moeller, Pierce High School; Troy Loeffelholz, Hastings Middle School; Barry Stark, Norris Middle School; and Jerry Sellentin of NCSA on July 23, 2003, visited Nebraska's Congressional Delegation on Capitol Hill. The visit to Capitol Hill was in connection with the National Association of Elementary Principals Association and the National Association of Secondary Principals State Leaders Conference.


Individual visits were held with Senators Hagel and Nelson, Congressmen Bereuter, Terry and Osborne and their Educational Staff. Emphasis with each Representative was on No Child Left Behind, funding of IDEA and issues facing Nebraska Schools.

Full funding is necessary for schools to accomplish the rigorous goals of No Child Left Behind. Each official shared their perspective on this legislation. Some didn't support it from the beginning because they knew it would not be totally funded. Others supported conceptual elements of the legislation but knew funding was going to be a problem in fully realizing the potential of this legislation. All members of the Nebraska congressional delegation understood the great pressure for schools to reach increasingly high goals each year or suffer serious consequences. All understood that Nebraska schools are high performing



schools. Discussions took place with the issue of schools dealing with the serious consequences of not meeting the increasing challenges of No Child Left Behind and the perception of the general public when schools are labeled as "failing." The Nebraska Congressmen all responded with "continue to do the great work Nebraska educators have already established and continue to move forward in improving instruction for all students." Nebraska schools are regarded as some of the very best in the country because of the leadership from Commissioner Doug Christensen and the Nebraska Department of Education. Nebraska senators and representatives believe Nebraska will continue to set the standard for others to follow as we move further into the depths of No Child Left Behind.

The other issue Nebraska principals

took to the hill was full mandatory funding for the reauthorization of I.D.E.A. It is currently being funded at 19 percent and the original legislation called for 40 percent funding for special education. Nebraska principals shared real life issues from their school perspectives with each Senator and Representative regarding the challenges schools face implementing special education programs. They all indicated they are supportive of mandatory funding but again the outlook was unrealistic to think full mandatory funding for IDEA will be endorsed in the near future. Few senators or congressmen will tie themselves to require full funding of IDEA whatever the costs may be. Congress would not support any legislation that would provide full mandatory funding on any legislation at this time. Principals discussed the increase in mental health issues of our special education population and the increased numbers of special education students coming to Nebraska schools. This all equates to increased financial burdens to local school districts. The good news is that funding levels for IDEA have increased over the past few years. The congressional plan is to increase this funding at a rate that would in time fully fund this legislation at the 40 percent level it was originally planned. Both the House and Senate sides of Congress have discussed a seven-year plan to reach the 40 percent funding this as originally promised. 





IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING

(continued from page 4)

The Team Learning Logs will contain information such as 1) specific standard, 2) new strategy used, 3) short-term assessment and 4) assessment results.

The conceptual framework described above eases the time overload of staff by shortening the time to identify strengths and weaknesses, eliminates bewilderment by focusing on specific and attainable goals, removes the confusion by insuring short term success on a continuous basis and allow for teacher growth and improved student achievement through research and development. The four steps, when linked together, create

a synergy for increasing academic achievement and has additional benefits of increasing the capacity of teachers and administrators to successfully build and sustain a vision that insures improvement of learning for all students, and it allows the school district to balance the testing mandates for STARS and N.C.L.B. while insuring that meaningful school improvement is occurring.

*The above strategies for school improvement are credited to Mike Schmoker, author of Results, The Key to Continuous School Improvement.

BACK TO SCHOOL

(continued from page 1)

work to do. Let's look at what still looms ahead.

First of all, there is the economy. It affects us directly. Schools are being asked to do more and more with the same or less amount of money. Even with the additional levy authority, budgets are limited by the spending lid. Do we get the desired services to children, or are we forced to cut programs contrary to parents wants?

New programs are being required each year and 2003-04 is no exception. Your school should have received the Attack on Asthma Nebraska Education/Training Packets. Although the cost of the supplies and medications for this program is taken care of by Attack on Asthma Nebraska additional education and training will be necessary for the school staff.

Next, we need to be watchful of the Omaha and Nebraska Schools Trust lawsuit or any others that may be filed. These lawsuits bring the problem of funding to the front burner. As our society has changed since our state constitution was written so have today's children. How is the constitution going to be interpreted today? One can only speculate what the courts may decide. It may be tossed back to the legislature to fix it.

That is where all of us need to get involved. The people rely on the legislature while the legislature represents the people. As educators we need to collaborate to provide the ideas, encourage compromise, facilitate agreements and help provide financial support to meet the needs of today's children.

We must also work further with No Child Left Behind. Developing and aligning results-based curriculums and assessments with standards and instructional design practices to assure student learning will be a never ending endeavor. The need is even greater now that we have to be more accountable with No Child Left Behind.

I have just listed several things that are facing all of us this year, however, each year's challenges are just as exciting as the previous years. It is all those excited young faces coming through the doors each day that makes our job enjoyable. We can blamestorm (sit around and discuss who is responsible) or brainstorm ideas to meet the challenges. I choose the latter. Won't you join me in trying to make a difference?

UPCOMING EVENTS...

SEPTEMBER 10

School Law Update
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn - Kearney, NE

SEPTEMBER 15

Teacher Evaluations Workshop
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
ESU #13 - Scottsbluff, NE

SEPTEMBER 17

Teacher Evaluation Workshop
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn - Hastings, NE

SEPTEMBER 18

Teacher Evaluation Workshop
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Westside Community Conference
Center - Omaha, NE

SEPTEMBER 25-26

NASES/NDE Fall Conference
Sandhills Convention Center
North Platte, NE

OCTOBER 6

Paraeducators' Conference
8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Holiday Inn - Kearney, NE

OCTOBER 7-8

Governor's Summit on Workforce
Development
Embassy Suites - Lincoln, NE

OCTOBER 26-28

All Principals Conference
Golf Tournament - October 26th
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln, NE

For information and to register online for any of the above events, please visit www.ncsa.org



Leaders For Learning

(continued from page 2)

Promising Practice One: The vision for building local assessment was endorsed by key leaders and shared throughout the K-12 school system.

In the school districts where the vision and the purpose of assessment as part of teaching and learning was endorsed by key leaders and shared among all K-12 teachers in the entire district, the assessment process was positive and productive. Total staff involvement was a priority. If only 4th, 8th, or 11th grade teachers or a small group was singled out to build the process or if no one understood the vision and purpose of the process, negative emotions were present. The “Leaders for Learning” in the successful districts understood the vision of the local assessment building, communicated that vision and purpose clearly, and reinforced those beliefs through their actions with everyone in the system.

Promising Practice Two: Professional development was provided for all staff.

Professional development and the skill development of teachers and educators was evident in successful districts. Adult learning included both teachers and administrators. Students were not the only learners in those districts. Assessment literacy became a priority for all staff in successful districts. Although administrators may or may not have been directly involved in all of the districts in the development of the assessment process, they were assessment literate and supportive of the needed professional development. The “Leaders for Learning” in the successful districts participated either directly or indirectly in skill building and the professional development opportunities.

Promising Practice Three: Student benefit was the primary incentive for building local assessment.

The educators in districts building quality local assessment systems knew why and how their work was being done on behalf of their students. And they said so. The primary motivation in these districts was to do this “in the best interest of our kids.” In the districts where the purpose and vision was student centered, Leaders for Learning were motivated to use quality assessment data for the improvement

of student learning and for the benefit of the students. “Leaders for Learning” in these districts were the persistent voices about quality assessment working on behalf of the students. Through this process, opportunities for students and their performance would improve.

Promising Practice Four: The local assessment process was integrated into the regular curriculum and not a separate layer.

The school districts most successful with the assessment development process had integrated their assessments into the teaching and learning process and had not designed their assessment system as something separate from teaching and learning. Staff in these districts did not talk about having to “stop teaching in order to test.” Staff in the districts where integration had occurred did not see the state required assessment as merely compliance to a state regulation but as a natural part of gathering information about how well their students were doing with the instructional program. These staff members were letting the assessment results guide their instruction. “Leaders for Learning” were providing this encouragement and this vision for an integrated process.


Promising Practice Five: The assessment development process provided opportunities for collaboration.

In all of the successful school districts, across the district conversation and collaboration had occurred. This dialogue was within grade levels, across the K-12 district, across subject areas, in multiple districts, or in consortium settings. All of the evidence supported the need for collaboration and working together, but the effectiveness of the collaboration was determined by how it was structured, whether or not the participants in the collaboration understood the purpose of the task, and the support felt by those participants in the collaboration. “Leaders for Learning” were initiating, supporting, and participating in those conversations across the district, districts, grade levels and subject areas.

Promising Practice Six: The assessment development process was brought back to the “Big Picture” of School Improvement.

In the districts where the assessment process was recognized as the data source for the improvement of learning, the focus on the bigger picture, that of “school improvement” was maintained. In those successful districts, the local assessment system was seen as the means to data, the information that would guide continuous school improvement. If the purpose of the assessment system was not viewed as the data source for school improvement, a disconnect occurred. “We have been so busy with this ‘assessment stuff,’ that we have put school improvement on the “back burner.” “Leaders for Learning” in successful districts were providing the connection between local assessment data and its purpose in the big picture of school improvement efforts.

No one has ever said building local assessment was easy, including those “Leaders for Learning” in Nebraska districts. No one district has worked through all the issues, and no one district has all the answers. The challenges of building quality local assessment systems are real and are many. Nebraska’s “Leaders for Learning” met these challenges head on, realized failure as well as success, and continue to work their way through them building upon the leadership of all staff within the district. There are no magical or quick fixes. Building local assessment systems to be the source of quality assessment data for school improvement is a labor-intensive and time-consuming process. The complexity and diversity of building local assessment is not to be underestimated, but it can be accomplished, and has been accomplished wonderfully well by Nebraska school districts who have relied upon the expertise, integrity, and risk taking of Nebraska’s “Leaders for Learning.”

“Leaders for Learning” are found in all the educational roles: teachers, principals, curriculum directors, central office staff, staff developers, and superintendents. And, although each role varies in its direct connection with the students, all of the roles are in support of students and their learning. Therefore, a worthy goal for all of us to work at achieving is to become a “Leader for Learning.” Our leadership matters; our “Leadership for Learning” makes a difference to kids. That is why we became educators. 



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Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

3	NSASSP Region I, 5:30 p.m., Cortland Bar & Grill	Cortland
10	School Law Update, 8:00 a.m., Holiday Inn	Kearney
11	NASA Region I, 10:00 a.m., ESU #6	Milford
15	Teacher Evaluation Workshop, 9:00 a.m., ESU #13	Scottsbluff
17	Teacher Evaluation Workshop, 9:00 a.m., Holiday Inn	Hastings
17	NAESP Region II, 5:30 p.m., Rick Black's Boat House	Omaha
17	NAESP Region V, 9:30 a.m., Eagles Club	Bridgeport
17	NSASSP Region II, 5:30 p.m., UNO Alumni House	Omaha
17	NSASSP Region V, 10:00 a.m., Community Center	Bridgeport
17	NASA Region V, 12:00 noon, Eagles Club	Bridgeport
18	Teacher Evaluation Workshop, 9:00 a.m., Westside Community Center	Omaha
24	NAESP Region III, 2:00 p.m., Lifelong Learning Center	Norfolk
24	NSASSP Region II, 2:00 p.m., Lifelong Learning Center	Norfolk
25	NAESP Executive Board, 7:30 a.m., Sandhills Convention Center	North Platte
25-26	NAESP Fall Conference, 8:00 a.m., Sandhills Convention Center	North Platte
26	NAESP Region I, 2:00 p.m., Hamlow Elementary	Waverly

OCTOBER

1	NSASSP Region IV, 1:00 p.m., ESU #10	Kearney
3	NASA Region IV, 10:00 a.m., ESU #10	Kearney
6	Paraeducators Conference, 8:00 a.m., Holiday Inn	Kearney
7-8	Gov's Summit on Workforce, 7:00 a.m., Embassy Suites	Lincoln
8	NASA Region III, 9:00 a.m., Wayne State College	Wayne
8	NASA Region V, 12:00 noon, Gas Light	Gering
20	NAESP Region II, 5:30 p.m., UNO - Milo Bales Center	Omaha
24	NAESP Region I, 2:00 p.m., Hamlow Elementary	Waverly
26	All Principals Golf Tournament, 1:00 p.m., HiMark Golf Course	Lincoln
27-28	All Principals Conference, 9:00 a.m., Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
28	NAESP Executive Board, 11:00 a.m., Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
28	NSASSP Executive Board, 11:00 a.m., Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

- October 31-November 4 - ASBO National Convention - Charlotte, NC
- February 19-22 - AASA National Convention - San Francisco
- February 27-March 1 - NSASSP National Convention - Orlando
- April 17-21 - NAESP National Convention - San Francisco

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SEPTEMBER 2003



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President's Welcome 2003-2004

**By Scott Dodson, Woodland Park Elementary School
Norfolk, NE**

With school now in full swing, I hope that all of you were able to take some time off this summer to spend with family and friends, finish a few of your books on your "list", get away, or maybe complete a project or two. A change of pace is always refreshing to restore the energy and drive required to be effective with the many lives we influenced on a daily basis.

Jim Elliot, a missionary killed in the field at a young age, once stated, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." There are many things all of us give to the students, staff, and parents of our school, but I think the biggest impact is our time. Time for the child who has just lost a parent, or that everyone has given up on, time for the staff member who asks "Have you got a minute?" time for the parent who just doesn't know what to do with their child anymore, and your list can keep going. We cannot store up or keep time, but it can be continually given. We may not always immediately see the "gains", but the longer I am in education the more gains I see in the lives of students who have entered adulthood. Their excitement to share their successes and plans, seek out their "old" principal or teacher is a "gain" that we can never lose.

It is this focus of investing in the lives in our school that make all of you the hub of your community and our state.

I look forward to serving each of you as President of NAESP of this great organization. There are many activities planned through NAESP this year at the state and national level, and I encourage all of you to stay in touch and involved for your own growth and professional development. NAESP has a history of being outstanding, and let's continue that history.

I wish you all a rewarding school year, and don't forget to call your NAESP colleagues when those challenging moments occur. That is one of the great benefits of having colleagues across the state! Also, feel free to contact any of the officers of NAESP if you have questions or ideas.

We are fortunate to be in a profession where giving what we can't keep to gain what we can't lose is a priority. I can't think of a better reason to be investing in children's lives, can you?

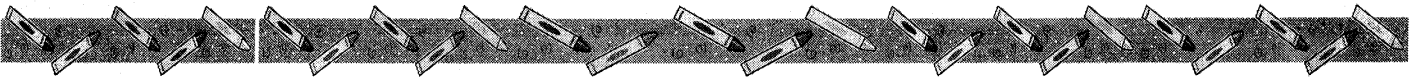
Have a great, giving year.

Around the Region...



Region IV - - Welcome back to a new school year on the wonderful roller coaster ride we call the principalship. I can't imagine another place I would want to be and I'm sure you all feel the same. Region IV has a number of activities scheduled throughout the year designed to: build student leadership skills, Youth Leadership Conference; encourage others to consider the principalship, Aspiring Principal's Conference; keep our members informed of the legislative process and issues that affect our schools, Mike Dulaney has agreed to be our guest speaker at our fall meeting and promote and facilitate those important relationships between the elementary principals in Region IV. We hope you will plan to join us! ~Teresa Schnoor

Region V - - The Registration Table at this year's Administrators' Days was a big success. We were able to register 35 new and renewing members. Each registrant received a "goody bag" with their registration and a chance to win a wall hanging. The M&M's of Region V, AKA the officers of Region V, are Marge Spencer, Mary Derby and Midge Mougey. It was so great to see you at Administrator Days! Thanks to all Region Administrators for taking the time stop by the booth and share! Thanks to those who renewed memberships OR who signed up for the first time with Region V. We have lots of great things in store for you this year. September 17 (Bridgeport), February 4, (Ogallala) and March 31 (Sidney). Great speakers and programs lined up: Mike Dulaney to speak on legislative issues, Tentative=Kandy Imes (State School Board member from our area), Railroad Safety, Pat Roschewski (NDE... assessment and NCLB), Lori Brouliette (Public Relations and working with the media). Administrator SHARING each meeting: once the needs/wants are determined, we will invite administrators to bring something to share at each meeting. In this way we can support each other and "join forces" for a strong, collaborative effort. Just a few Benefits of membership are...++ Leadership Day for 5th and 6th graders on October 14 in Ogallala ++ Strong support group ++ Collaborative Group ++Sharing of resources and ideas ++ and lots more!! ~Mary Derby



NAESP makes a return visit to California as San Francisco hosts the Association's 83rd Annual Convention and Exposition, April 16-20, 2004.

NAESP members will be encouraged to "Explore, Engage, Enjoy the Possibilities" of the principalship and of the city that was named the tops in the world by *Conde Nast Traveler's* annual Readers' Choice Awards. Each year, 16 million people visit San Francisco to take in the culture, the arts, and the cuisine of this unique city. Fisherman's Wharf, Golden Gate Park, Chinatown, and the famous cable cars are only a few of the fabulous sights the city has to offer. Of course, NAESP's Convention and Exposition will have much to offer as well, including more than 150 sessions, a full exhibit hall, the National Principal's Resource Center, and numerous exciting opportunities to network with your colleagues. Keep watching NAESP's publications and Web site for more information on the 2004 Convention and Exposition. For more information on San Francisco, visit www.sfvistor.org. For more information on NAESP's Convention and Exposition, visit the "Conventions" section of www.naesp.org.



- - Dateline NAESP - -

New NCLB Resource for Principals

The Learning First Alliance (LFA) recently published an online guide designed to facilitate open communication between principals and the public regarding provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The *Practical Guide for Talking with Your Community about NCLB* is available only online at www.learningfirst.org/publications/nclbguide. The Guide provides principals with information necessary to effectively discuss the process of raising school standards. These materials will connect principals to parents, teachers, and involved members of their communities.

NAESP Launches New Leadership Publication

It's almost here. For the past year, NAESP has been developing its newest publication *Leadership Compass*, a quarterly newsletter designed to help principals be the instructional leaders of their schools through staff development. NAESP members will receive the first issue of *Leadership Compass* in September.

The eight-page newsletter contains an in-depth article on a topic of interest to teachers and principals, with a discussion page designed to help principals and teachers talk about the teaching and learning going on in their schools. It also includes practical advice, tips on classroom management, print and Web resources, cartoons, quotes, and more. *Leadership Compass* replaces *Here's How* and *Streamlined Seminar*.

NAESP is looking for principals willing to give in-depth feedback on the practicality and interest of the newsletter. If you are interested, please send your contact information to Becky Kesner at bkesner@naesp.org.