



**INVESTMN**  
Implementing a New Vision to  
Educate Students for Tomorrow

## Bits 'n Pieces Spring 2009

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### Just the Facts

#### Good News

- The majority of Republicans, Democrats and Independents all consider Education one of the top 5 issues of importance. – *Education Vital Signs, 2008*
- 52 percent of Minnesota kindergartners are proficient in personal and social development, up from 39 percent in 2002. – *Minnesota School Readiness Study, Fall 2007, Minnesota Department of Education*
- 50 percent of Minnesota kindergartners are proficient in language and literacy, up slightly from 44 percent in 2002. – *Minnesota School Readiness Study, Fall 2007, Minnesota Department of Education*
- The percentage of U.S. 8<sup>th</sup> graders scoring at or above the *proficient* level on NAEP has gone up from 1990 to 2007 for all major ethnic groups, except Asian/Pacific which has remained at the top. – *Education Vital Signs, 2008*
- Minnesota students had the highest NAEP results in the region for 8<sup>th</sup> grade math and were tied for highest NAEP reading scores. (2007) – *Education Vital Signs, 2008*
- The percentage of U.S. 8<sup>th</sup> graders scoring at or above the *basic* level on NAEP has gone up between 1990 and 2007 for all ethnic groups although a significant gap remains among groups. – *Education Vital Signs, 2008*
- Minnesota students have the highest ACT composite scores in the North Central Region (2007). – *Education Vital Signs, 2008*

#### Summer Set Up

This is the time to strategize, organize and publicize your summer agenda. Many of your constituents don't know what, if anything, school administrators do over the summer months. It's your job to let them know what you are doing, why and how it benefits them. The following steps will help to make your summer months more productive and will remind stakeholders that you are busy at work for them.

1. Encourage your staff to provide students and parents with suggestions/materials to ensure continued academic and social growth over the summer months.
2. Develop a flexible summer calendar for yourself that includes strategic public relations goals.
3. Publicize your summer tasks, goals, commitments and schedule
4. Communicate progress, challenges, and opportunities
5. Monitor public attitudes and expectations formally and informally

#### Did You Know?

- Young children in Minnesota are more diverse and more likely to be in low-income households than Minnesotans in other stages of life. – *2006 American Community Survey*
- Each year 10,000 Minnesota students drop out of high school. – *Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students, Growth and Justice, November 2008*
- The cost to the Minnesota economy over the lifetime of students who drop out of high school is \$10 billion. – *Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students, Growth and Justice, November 2008*
- Every high school graduate represents a gain to Minnesota taxpayers of \$251,900 through increased tax revenues and lower expenditures on health, crime, and welfare. – *Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students, Growth and Justice, November 2008*

- Minnesota is above average for the cost of attending public post secondary institutions. – *The lost Decade*, The Minnesota Budget Project
- There continues to be a significant achievement gap among ethnicities in the United States. – *Educational Vital Signs*, 2008
- 43 percent of Americans believe too much emphasis is placed on achievement testing. – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008
- 60 percent of Americans oppose allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense. – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008
- 66 percent of Americans oppose school boards contracting with private profit-making corporations to run all of their schools. – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008
- 55 percent of Americans have a somewhat or very unfavorable opinion of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008
- Only 28 percent of Americans believe NCLB has helped the schools in their community. – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008
- Minnesota ranks lowest of the ten states in the North Central region in the expenditures per pupil dedicated to school administration. – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008
- Minnesota has the highest percent (7%) of LEP/ELL students among the states in the North Central Region. (2005-2006) – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008
- Minnesota ranks last among the North Central region states in the percent of 4-year-olds enrolled in state Pre-K programs (2005-2006) – *Education Vital Signs*, 2008

## **Public investment**

- Since 1991, the basic education funding formula has been frozen six times. – Pat Gleason, Chair of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) Commentary, *Star Tribune*
- The K-12 general education formula does not have inflationary adjustments built in. – Pat Gleason, Commentary, *Star Tribune*
- If the basic formula allowance had simply kept pace with inflation since 1991, it would be \$1,087 per pupil higher than it is today. – Pat Gleason, Commentary, *Star Tribune*
- Total public spending on early care and education in 2008 was nearly \$399 million, an increase of about 5 percent since 2002 in real dollars, but about a 13 percent decrease in adjusted dollars according to the consumer price index. – Richard Chase, Wilder Research, November 2008
- School districts now rely more on property taxes than they have since FY 2003. – Richard Chase, Wilder Research, 2008
- Minnesota's ranking among states in state funding for higher education, as a share of personal income, has dropped from 12<sup>th</sup> in FY 2001 to 35<sup>th</sup> in FY 2006. – *The lost Decade*, The Minnesota Budget Project
- State higher education funding per full-time student dropped by 28 percent from FY 2000 to FY 2007. – *The lost Decade*, The Minnesota Budget Project
- From FY 2003 to FY 2009 per pupil state to school districts fell by 14 percent. – *The lost Decade*, The Minnesota Budget Project
- From FY 2003 to FY 2009 school property taxes per pupil rose by 48 percent. – *The lost Decade*, The Minnesota Budget Project
- There is no evidence of a link between QComp and improved student performance according to reports by the legislative auditor and the Minnesota Department of Education. State Representative and Chair of the House K-12 House Finance Division, Mindy Greiling, *MinnPost*, February 2009

## **Cause for Pause**

(The following is taken from *Get smart about kids and media*, Common Sense Media)

- 44.5 hours a week is the average time that kids 8-18 spend with media.
- 55 percent of online teens have a social networking profile on a site like Facebook or My Space.

- ½ of kids who start smoking do so because they saw it in movies.
- 89 percent of top-selling video games contain violent content, almost half of which is of a serious nature.
- 60 percent of female video game characters are presented in a sexualized fashion.
- 20 percent of U.S. children say they do things online that their parents would not approve of.
- 40 percent of teens and preteens surveyed said they've recently come across nudity and pornography on the internet.

## To Do List

- Learn more about *Minnesota's Promise* at [www.minnesotaspromise.org](http://www.minnesotaspromise.org)
- Learn more about the *Minnesota School of Excellence Program* at [www.mespa.net](http://www.mespa.net)
- Learn more about *The Bridge to Higher Learning* at [www.massp.org](http://www.massp.org)
- Learn more about the New Minnesota Miracle at [www.parentsunited.org/NewMNMiracle](http://www.parentsunited.org/NewMNMiracle)
- Learn more about community assets for youth at [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)
- Learn more about the impact of media on kids at [www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org)

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## Quotes and Quotables

### Leadership

- “Courageous leadership is about how well you lead and teach those who report to you but more importantly it is about how well you lead and teach those you report to.” – Kathy Lucas, President of Fairview Home Care and Hospice
- “I believe that significant improvements in teaching and learning for all students begin with significant change in leaders.” – Dennis Sparks, emeritus executive director of the National Staff Development Council, *Phi Delta Kappan*, March 2009

### Future

- “If we continue on the current course, and the number of nations outpacing us in the education race continues to grow at its current rate, the American standard of living will steadily decline relative to those nations, rich and poor, that are doing a better job.” – *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, the new commission on the Skills of the American Workforce

### Progress

- “If you fight for democracy abroad, you have to strengthen it at home.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

### Education

- “Think about education as infrastructure for our people...a well-educated citizenry.” – Minnesota State Representative Carlos Mariani
- “The economics may present challenges but it's up to the schools to put programs in place that overcome those challenges.” – Eric Mahmoud, co-founder of Harvest Prep Charter School (a K-6 school that met all its state testing goals)
- “All we have to do is bypass 19<sup>th</sup> century education such as NCLB” – Arthur Harkins, Innovation studies, comparative and international education, University of Minnesota
- “Our task is urgent: our children's future is not expendable.” Sandra Vargars, Minneapolis Foundation CEO and President, former Hennepin County Administrator

### Communication

- “In our rush to be efficient, we have lost the human side of the proposition, and when that is lost, communication is lost.” – Paul D. Houston, executive director emeritus of AASA
- “You can observe a lot by watching.” Yogi Berra



## Bonus!

Be the first to share the title and a brief description of the book that has been most helpful to you in your educational leadership position and you will win a copy of *The Blue Zone*. Be the first to submit your title and description to [sprest@arkassoc.com](mailto:sprest@arkassoc.com) and you will receive a copy of the book.

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These materials are provided by:  
**Minnesota Association of School Administrators**  
**Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals**  
**Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association**

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