



Bits 'n Pieces Winter 2012

For use by School Leaders

Just the Facts

Bragging Rights

- Minnesota students/schools rank second in the nation on the SERI score. *Science and Engineering Readiness Index (SERI) measures how high school students are performing in physics and calculus -- based on publicly available data, including Advanced Placement scores, National Assessment of Educational Progress reports, teacher certification requirements by state and physics class enrollment data.*
- Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Jersey top the list states whose primary education systems are preparing students for careers in engineering.
- Approximately 20 percent of Minnesota high school seniors earn college credits by the time they graduate from high school.
- Minnesota has won a federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant to advance early education efforts.

Grading Schools

- 1,056 out of 2,255 Minnesota schools are not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law.
- 34 schools included are in the mandatory restructuring phase.
- 45 additional schools statewide must prepare to restructure.
- 289 schools are scheduled to receive other consequences.
- Many schools are labeled as failing even though their outcomes are improving.
- If a school doesn't make enough progress in even one student subgroup the whole building can be labeled as failing.

Compare and Contrast (taken from Fareed Zakaria GPS, *Restoring the American Dream:*

Fixing Education, CNN, January 7, 2012)

South Korea

- 1st in reading and 2nd in math among all nations according to PISA exam.
- South Korean children have longer and more school days—adding up to almost two more years in the classroom— than their American counterparts.
- South Korean students are drilled (often) into the late evening.
- The average South Korean family spends about 20 percent of their income on private tutoring.
- Suicides rates among school-age children in South Korea are abnormally high.
- According to the former Minister of Education, “They [students] don’t know how to enjoy learning.”
- The biggest problem we have in education is that “Parents care too much.” – South Korean President Lee Myung-bak

Finland

- 1st in the world in science and 2nd in Math
- Shorter school days and fewer hours in the classroom than the students in most developed countries, including the U.S.
- Children don't begin attending school until they are seven years old.
- Finnish students have less homework than many countries.
- Finnish schools have never had a standardized testing system.
- Teaching is a highly respected profession...on par with doctors and lawyers.
- Teachers spend less time drilling the facts and more time developing students' creativity.
- Finnish schools are less concerned with *how much* time is spent in school and focus on *how* the time in school is spent.
- Finnish teachers are given more autonomy.
- Finnish teachers tend to stay in the profession about 7 times longer than their U.S. counterparts.
- Only 4% of Finnish children are poor.

United States

- 15th in reading, 23rd in science and 31st in math. (International Test, World Economic Forum ranking)
- Kids in the U.S. have about 25 fewer days of instruction than South Korea and a few more than Finland.
- There are lower academic requirements for teachers in the U.S. than in Finland.
- The turnover among U.S. teachers is roughly 7 times higher than it is for Finnish teachers.
- American classroom populations are far more diverse in language, ethnic origins and family income level than their South Korean or Finnish counterparts.
- 20% of U.S. children live in poverty.
- "American education at its best teaches you how to solve problems, question authority, think for yourself and be creative. It teaches you to learn what you love and to love learning." – Fareed Zekaria
- The United States uses a standardized testing system.

Education and Globalization (Summary of presentation by Dr. Yong Zhao

Presidential Chair and Associate Dean for Global Education, College of Education at the University of Oregon, director of the Center for Advanced Technology in Education (CATE) and fellow of the International Academy for Education.)

- Innovation creates entrepreneurs.
- Entrepreneurs create jobs.
- Jobs equal a higher quality of life.
- NCLB and other forms of testing kill innovation.
- The current U.S. education system is actually pretty good, especially when compared with other countries.
- Other countries such as China and South Korea are working hard to create an educational system modeled after the U.S.
- The U.S. is working hard to create an educational system that looks like China's.

Likelihood of Employment

- The unemployment rate for college graduates today is 4 percent.
- The unemployment rate for high school dropouts is 14 percent.

Values and Variables

The following is taken from a 2010 UNICEF report as published in *The School Administrator*, October 2011, comparing childhood supports in 24 of the world's wealthy nations. The United States is often considered the world's wealthiest nation. The United State's rankings are as follow:

- 23rd of 24 in material well being – National Center for Children in Poverty
 - 20 percent of American children live in poverty
 - 40 percent of American children live in low-income housing
 - In the last ten years the percent of impoverished children has grown by a third.
- 23rd in measures of health
- 19th in educational well-being
- 13th in math (UNICEF report)

On the Brain (taken from Jennifer M. Worden, Christina Hinton, and Kurt W. Fisher, *What*

Does the Brain have to do with Learning? Phi Delta Kappan, May, 2011)

- There is no inherent correlation between brain size and intelligence or academic achievement.
- No Neuroscientific data suggest that boys' or girls' brains are better suited to any given domain or subject.
- The right brain/left brain split is not a fact.

Reaching Out

Speaking of Schools -- U R the 1

1. Contact your local legislators now to advance a mutually beneficial exchange of information, perspectives and objectives.
2. Invite local leaders to spend time in your schools and ask if you can visit their organization.
3. Encourage school advocates to form a legislative committee to promote the interests of your community/school district.

Quotes and Quotables

School Funding

- “With class sizes increasing due to teacher layoffs, and the dismissal of reading specialists, it is not far-fetched to say that learning is being jeopardized by less money being spent on education.” – Jack Jennings, President and CEO, Center on Education Policy, January 10, 2012
- “Nothing is more important to our state's long-term economic success than making sure all of our kids come to school ready to learn.” – Commissioner Brenda Cassellius

Charters (taken from The School Administrator, August 2011)

- “Thus far...little evidence points to competition stimulating significant change or innovation in instructional practice.” –David D. Arsen and Yongmei NI, *Shaking Up Public Schools With Competition*
- “...if the existing research has one thing to say, it is that competition from charter schools has little impact on student performance in traditional public schools.” – David D. Arsen and Yongmei NI, *Shaking Up Public Schools With Competition*
- “Perhaps the greatest benefit of charter status has been the shift from a culture of compliance to one of innovation.” – Merrienne Dyer, Superintendent Gainesville City Schools, *All-Charter Status Brings Us Flexibility and More*
- "I definitely think in 2012, what was good enough even five years ago, is no longer good enough." Michael Duffy, former director of New York City's charter school office, on the city's decision to shut a charter school in Queens

Traditional Schools

- “When you look at South Korea or Finland, getting great teachers is obviously at the heart of good education.” Fareed Zakaria
- “Part of the reason we’re in this crisis is that we have slacked off and allowed our education system to get rigid and schlerotic. – Fareed Zakaria

Leadership

- “Every general manager today - all the way up to the CEO - is expected by his or her stakeholders to achieve new breakthroughs in performance—and fast.” – *The Breakthrough Imperative*, Mark Gottfredson, Steve Schaubert, Collins Business: January, 2009
- “Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” – Harold R. McAlindon (also attributed to Emerson and others)

The Future

- “The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.” – Winston Churchill
- “Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.” – Maya Angelou

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

To request more information, contact one of the above organizations
or sprest@arkassoc.com

