



## Bits 'n Pieces Spring 2010

For use by School Leaders

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### Just the Facts

#### The Future

Minnesota's Promise provides a path for **schools**, **districts**, and the **state** to take toward achieving world-class schools and a world-class state in each of the following areas

1. Early Childhood Education
2. Educator Quality
3. Academic Rigor
4. Family and Community Involvement
5. Multicultural Community
6. Data and Research
7. Funding
8. Time
9. Special Education
10. Health and Wellness

Learn more about your role in keeping the promise by going to [www.minnesotaspromise.org](http://www.minnesotaspromise.org).

#### Early Childhood

- 81% of Americans favor compulsory kindergarten. (PDK/Gallup Poll, 2009)
- 58% of Americans would be willing to pay more taxes for funding free preschool programs for those children whose parents are unable to pay for them. (PDK/Gallup Poll, 2009)
- 50% of Americans believe preschool programs should be provided in the public schools. (PDK/Gallup Poll, 2009)
- New evidence shows that key early childhood relationships actually shape brain circuits and lay the foundation for later developmental outcomes, from academic performance and interpersonal skills to physical and mental health. (Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University)
- Research shows it is possible to improve a wide range of outcomes for vulnerable children well into their adult years, as well as generate benefits to society far in excess of program costs. (Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University)

#### After School Programing

- Children who attend extended-time programs (before school, after school, or during the summer) show higher than average growth on standardized assessments. (Office of the Legislative Auditor)

#### Good News to Share

- ▲ American eighth-graders have moved up to 9<sup>th</sup> place in Math internationally in 2009 from 28<sup>th</sup> place in 1995.
- ▲ More people give their public and A or B than have at any time in the past five years.
- ▲ Minnesota received a B+ for *Children's Chance for Success* on the Education Week: Quality Counts 2010 – State Report Cards

#### Charter schools -- Cause for Pause

More people favor the idea of charter schools than have in the past five years. However the majority of Americans do not understand how charter schools operate. For example:

- 57% of Americans believe charter schools charge tuition
- Most Americans do not know that charter schools are public schools

#### Red Flags

- Minnesota Ranks 50<sup>th</sup> among the states on spending for school administration.

- Only one out of four Americans believe No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has helped the schools in their community. (Phi Delta Kappan, 2009, PDK/Gallup Poll)
- Only one out of four Americans has a favorable opinion of NCLB. (PDK/Gallup Poll, 2009)

## Public Perspectives

The following data is taken from the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

- Most respondents believe the biggest problem facing the public schools of their community is lack of funding. More than three times as many people identify funding than identify any other problem.
- Most respondents believe the public schools in *their own community* should be graded A or B.
- 74% of respondents give the public school their oldest child attends an A or B.
- Only 19% of respondents give the public schools in the nation as a whole an A or B.
- Almost 9 out of 10 Americans believe the dropout rate in the U.S. is either the most important or one of the most important problems facing high schools today.
- 43% of people get most of their information about their community schools from the newspapers followed by 20% that get most of their information from school employees.

## To Do List

- Learn more about *Minnesota's Promise* at [www.minnesotaspromise.org](http://www.minnesotaspromise.org)
- Learn more about the New Minnesota Miracle at [www.parentsunited.org/NewMNMiracle](http://www.parentsunited.org/NewMNMiracle)
- Learn more about Emotional and behavioral development in a child's early years at [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu)

## Today

- Get contact information for lawmakers, committee assignments, and a legislative schedule at [www.leg.state.mn.us/](http://www.leg.state.mn.us/)
- Go to your professional organization's web site to stay current on issues that affect you. ([mnasa.org](http://mnasa.org), [mespa.net](http://mespa.net), or [massp.org](http://massp.org))
- Make contact with your legislator and legislative leaders.
- Form a plan to add or improve a district legislative committee.

## Quotes and Quotables

### Leadership

- "For every action, there is a corresponding over-reaction." – unknown
- "Wise people think all that they say; fools say all that they think." – unknown
- "What we see depends mainly on what we look for." – John Lubbock
- "We become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions." – Aristotle

### Citizenship

- "The nation's ability to effectively grapple with problems has eroded. That's primarily for cultural reasons, such as the growth of self-isolating communities, political polarization and a gap between experts and the public in how they frame issues." – Daniel Yankelovich, public opinion research pioneer, cofounder and chairman of Public Agenda
- "People tend to make rules for others and exceptions for themselves." – unknown
- "Whenever ideas are shared, the result is always greater than the sum of the parts." – Rich Willis
- "Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you." – Ralph Waldo Emerson
- "The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intention." -- Duguet

### Future

- "Nothing is predestined: The obstacles of your past can become the gateways that lead to new beginnings." – Ralph Blum
- "When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wonder what happened." – John M. Richardson

- “Stop acting as if life is a rehearsal. Live this day as if it were your last. The past is over and gone. The future is not guaranteed.” – Wayne Dyer
- “The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.” – Abraham Lincoln

## Progress

- “If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you make progress.” – Barack Obama, 2005
- “When the music changes, so does the dance” – African Proverb
- “He who learns, teaches.” – African Proverb

## Accountability

- “Our children only have one opportunity to participate in a world class education system. We must come together as a state and advocate on behalf of our children.” – Gary Amoroso, Superintendent of Lakeville Area Schools, MASA President.
- "It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable." – Moliere
- “The hardest thing to learn in life is which bridge to cross and which to burn.” – unknown
- "Life is not accountable to us. We are accountable to life." – Denis Waitley
- “No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline.” – Kofi Annan

## Just for Fun Bonus Questions!

Be the first to submit your answers to [sprest@arkassoc.com](mailto:sprest@arkassoc.com) and I will send you a copy of *Sparks: How Parents Can Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers* by Peter L. Benson. The last bonus book was sent to Mike Martin, principal of Hawley High School.

- 1) Who said, “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest”? (*clue: go to your organization’s website and review the INVESTMN winter article, “Funding for the Future.”*)
- 2) Tell one way your school or district has changed as a result of your commitment to *Minnesota’s Promise*.
- 3) Who is your professional organization’s president and executive director? (MASA, MASSP, MESPA)
- 4) What do you call a group of jellyfish?

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](mailto:sprest@arkassoc.com)

