



Bits 'n Pieces Fall 2011

For use by School Leaders

Just the Facts

Bragging Rights

- Minnesota is the 5th healthiest and happiest state according to a recent gallop poll, *Gallop--Healthways Well-being Index*, 2010. (Business Insider.com) The index includes such factors as life evaluation, emotional health, physical health, etc. Happiness seems to correlate with healthy lifestyles. Some other Minnesota variables include the following:
 - 54.8% eat produce frequently
 - 10.5% of Minnesotans are uninsured
 - 53.7% of Minnesotans exercise frequently
 - 25.2% of Minnesotans are obese
- Minnesota's average ACT composite score of 22.9 was the highest in the nation among the 27 states in which more than half the college-bound students took the test in 2010.
- Minnesota has led the nation in average composite ACT scores for six consecutive years. The national composite score is 21.0.
- Eighth-grade students improved in math NAEP 2009 (National Assessment of Educational Progress) scores (from 292 to 294), mirroring the national average increase (from 280 to 282). Minnesota remains 12 points above the national average and only Massachusetts posted results statistically higher than Minnesota.
- Minnesota (249) has one of the highest NAEP 2009 (National Assessment of Educational Progress) scale scores for fourth grade math behind Massachusetts (252) and New Hampshire (251). No other state had a significantly higher score than Minnesota. Four states had similar scores (Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and New Jersey). The rest were significantly lower than Minnesota.

School Days

The education bill has converted the minimum number of school days per year into required number of hours of instruction per year.

- 425 hours in Kindergarten
- 935 hours in grades 1 through 6
- 1020 hours in grades 7 through 12

Did You Know?

- The freshman class of U.S. senators has a median net worth close to \$4 million
- 66 U.S. senators are millionaires (66%)
- 179 members of the U.S. House of Representatives are millionaires (41%)
- In total, 245 members of the U.S. congress are millionaires
- 1 percent of Americans are millionaires

Gaps and Gains

- The changes in average household income for Americans over the past three decades are reflected in the following information:
 - The bottom 80 percent has remained relatively constant.
 - The top 20 percent has doubled.
 - The top 1 percent of has quadrupled.
 - The top 20 percent of Americans own 80 percent of the wealth.
 - The bottom 80 percent share the remaining 20 percent of the wealth.
- From 2003 to 2011, the number of immigrants and students of color in our public schools increased sharply, from about 160,000 to 215,000, or by about 34 percent. Meanwhile, per pupil state aid to school districts, adjusted for inflation, declined by 15 percent. -- *Racial Diversity Increasing; Public School State Aid Decreasing*, Thursday, June 30, 2011, Growth & Justice
- Minnesota's African-American students' NAEP test scores improved from 260 to 264 in eighth-grade mathematics and exceeded the nation's scale score (260). Minnesota remains four points above the national average (260) but below the average for white students in Minnesota.
- Minnesota Hispanic students' NAEP test scores remained at 269 in eighth-grade mathematics with Hispanic students scoring four points above the national average (266) but below the average for white students in Minnesota.

Autism now and then

- Autism was first diagnosed 68 years ago
- In 1982 four out of ten thousand people were diagnosed with autism (4/10,000).
- In 2011 one out of one hundred and ten people are diagnosed with autism spectrum (1/110).
- There is no guarantee of services for autism after an individual reaches twenty-two years of age.

Reaching Out

Speaking of Schools

When communicating with your school/district stakeholders, remember the following:

- Audience Analysis – Adapt all communications for the audience you are addressing. Is the audience parents, non-parents, staff, highly educated, etc.

- Relevance – Share what the audience wants and needs to know rather than what you want to tell.
- Attention – Get the audience’s attention with a brief, concise and relevant story, poem, visual, etc.
- Preview the information you will be sharing and the timeframe within which you will be sharing it.
- Content – Name the topic and organize and emphasize the key points sequentially and outline next steps if appropriate.
- Review – Recap the key points.
- Feedback – Provide a clear and channel for questions or comments (either on-the-spot or through a follow-up contact opportunity).

Quotes and Quotables

Cause for Pause

- Most Americans are being represented by people who are the financial elite. – Dave Levinthal, spokesman for the Center for Responsive Politics
- Congressmen can go into hearings and confidential meetings with business interests, understanding new legislation is going to come out next week and are free to trade on that information. – Craig Holman, government affairs lobbyist for the consumer advocacy organization Public Citizen.
- Once in office, members of Congress enjoy access to connections and information they can use to increase their wealth, in ways that are unparalleled in the private sector. – Stephanie Condon, CBS News, *Political Hotsheet*, June 30, 2011
- “Minnesota continues to have one of the widest achievement gaps in the country – a gap that persists among racial groups as well as across socioeconomic levels. In addition, Minnesota’s demographics will change considerably by 2020. The populations that are expected to grow are currently on the low end of the achievement gap, which is most worrisome for employers. In 2018, 70 percent of all jobs in Minnesota will require some training beyond high school.” – Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Perspectives

- History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity. -- Cicer
- The difference between visionaries and dreamers is that visionaries make the dreams come true.” – Walter R. Mueller
- We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.” – Abraham Lincoln
- An investment in knowledge pays the best interest. -- anonymous

Fact or Fiction

- Debunking...Myths About Public Education, National Access Network, 2007 as cited on www.parentsunited.org

- MYTH - School district revenue from state and local sources outpaced inflation by 24 percent since 1996.
REALITY: In inflation-adjusted dollars per pupil, total school district revenues have grown at an average rate of about one percent per year since FY 1996.
- MYTH - The best way to increase prosperity is to decrease taxes.
REALITY: Education is a proven economic driver.

Just for Fun

- You know you've been on the computer too long when you get in the elevator and double-click the button for the floor you want. – *Coffee News*, Volume 10:1
- Teacher: Billy, name two pronouns.
Billy: Who, me?
Teacher: Well done!
- Did you know that five out of three people have trouble with fractions? – Tripod.com

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