



Bits 'n Pieces Winter 2011

For use by School Leaders

Just the Facts

Healthy Start (Dash, 2011)

- 36% of high school students eat breakfast.
- 50% of middle school students eat breakfast.
- 89% of moms want their kids to eat breakfast.

Did You Know?

- Poverty is the single greatest factor limiting student achievement. (AASA)
- Barely half of schools run by education management organizations meet AYP. (AASA)
- 84% of school districts nationally are expecting further funding cuts this year.¹
- 61% of the districts that anticipate funding cuts plan to cut staff.¹
- Over 50% of districts making cuts expect to postpone or stop reform initiatives.¹
- More Americans than ever before (36%) think lack of financial support/funding/money is the biggest problem that schools deal with.

Investment and Innovation (taken from the 43rd annual PDK/Gallup annual poll, 2011)

- Most Americans (95%) believe it is very or somewhat important that all students have access to computer technology.
- Most Americans (91%) believe access to computer technology is very or somewhat important for academic success.
- Most Americans (74%) think the public schools in their community should invest more in computer technology for instructional purposes.
- Just over half (51%) of Americans think all high school students in their community should have their own computer to use at school.

Taxes

- Minnesota's corporate income tax rate is 9.8%.²
- The share of gross state product paid by Minnesota businesses in state and local taxes in 2010 was 4.4 percent.³
- The national average of gross state product paid by business in state and local taxes in 2010 is 5 percent.³
- Minnesota's share of gross state product paid by Minnesota businesses in state and local taxes in 2010 is lower than the share paid by businesses in Iowa, Wisconsin and North Dakota.³
- Minnesota's individual income tax rate is 7.85%.²

- Primary factors that determine where businesses will locate include². (in priority order):
 - 1) Work force issues – prevailing salary scales, education and training, etc.
 - 2) Proximity to customers and suppliers, transportation, energy costs, site costs, etc.
 - 3) Taxes – “if everything else is a wash taxes might tip the decision.”
- The best economic development investments a state can make follow²:
 - 1) Education
 - 2) Infrastructure
- Twin Cities Business research of business consultants did not reveal a single client that moved from Minnesota as a result of tax rates.² (Although, they did reveal some that expanded elsewhere because of the other states’ more lax banking regulatory climate.)

Bullies and Bullied

Equip Parents, teachers, and students to “bully-proof” kids⁴

- **Start early**
 - Help children to understand the difference between thinking, feeling and action. “Parents and teachers will find that it is not how savvy they are in their conversations with their child, but rather how often they engage the child in preparing for thinking, feeling and action when the parent is not around.” Tammy Hughes, chair of Duquesne University department of counseling, psychology and special education.
- **Sense of self**
 - “It’s about ...really being tuned into children and the kind of people they are.” – Richard Weissbourd, lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education
 - 1) Favored activities
 - 2) Discussions
 - 3) Recognition and appreciation of individuality
- **Look in the mirror**
 - “Parents [Adults] whose default response is one of intimidation may inadvertently model bullying behavior for children. Donna Henderson, professor of counseling at Wake Forest University
 - “Parents [Adults] who are reasonable, calm and practice problem-solving in the face of stress and uncertainty model those skills and attitudes for their children. – Donna Henderson, professor of counseling at Wake Forest University
- **Develop overlapping circles**
 - Encourage kids to be involved in after-school activities and clubs they enjoy. “This is great for building self-esteem and gaining a greater sense of purpose... Say my child is being bullied in an art group. Having other social groups lets my child experience something very different.” – Virginia Wilkins, director of mentoring for *College For Every Student*.
 - Help kids develop physical confidence through activity and participation. “This makes a child more confident (which) carries over into how a kids holds him- or herself in the world. Bullies are predators by nature and prefer the weak as prey. A confident child is less likely to be a victim.” – Kris Wilder, Franciscan monk and author.
- **When it’s not what it seems**
 - Be open to alternative root causes of bullying complaints. i.e.: Is the child reaping some benefit from being bullied?

In the end...

- Minnesota ranked number one in the quality of care for the elderly.
- Minnesota’s scored well in the area of quality of care, access, number of choices, and support for family caretakers.
- As many as 200,000 people could be kept out of nursing homes if other states used the Minnesota Model.
- Minnesota led the nation on 7 of 25 measures ranking first overall.
- Minnesota ranked lower on the cost and quality of home health care.

Reaching Out

Speaking of Schools -- U R the 1

It is the role of school leaders to communicate what's right about schools and describe how schools are proactively working to change what's wrong with schools. Take on one new personal or public communication challenge each month. Begin a new column, reinvent yourself on the community speaking circuit, create a new cable program, start a blog, etc. (i.e. see www.spps.org/home)

- Describe the history and accomplishments of local schools
- Identify current and emerging issues facing local schools
- Share a compelling strategies for
- “Generally Speaking,” most Americans (68%) hear more bad stories about teachers than good about teachers in the media.

Quotes and Quotables

In memoriam

- "To dream what is possible and to put oneself in service of that dream is the formula for a life well-lived." -Peter Lorimer Benson, Ph.D. (May 2, 1946 - October 2, 2011)

Clarifying your Message

- “You trust us that when you give us your child every day, we’re going to help make them into a better child, learner and a leader for our future.” Superintendent Valeria Silva, St. Paul Public Schools

Competition (taken from The School Administrator, *Shaking Up Public Schools With Competition*,

August 2011 David D. Arsen and Yongmei NI)

- “Thus far...little evidence points to competition stimulating significant change or innovation in instructional practice.”
- “...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.”

Progress

- “We have the minds, the tools and the technology to be great or great again.” – Dr. Yong Zhao
- [Baby boomers] have a lot to answer for. They have not followed in the path of their parents in terms of making the hard decisions, making the long-term investments.” -- Thomas Friedman

Taxes

- “If low tax rates were the determiner, Mississippi and Alabama would be far ahead of Minnesota [in business activity]. And if high taxes were a determiner, New York City would be dead.” – David Schultz, professor Hamline University School of Business and specialist in economic development

- “Hundreds of studies overwhelmingly reach the conclusion that tax breaks to encourage economic relocation or investment are generally economically inefficient and wasteful.” – David Schultz, Professor Hamline University School of Business and specialist in economic development

Bullies and Bullied

- “Schools with rigorous anti-bullying programs are more likely to stop bullies in their tracks, but not every school has a commitment to stopping the abuse.” – Katia Hetter, CNN, October 11, 2011

Technology

- “I am flabbergasted at the amount of creative thought happening in our state. The products that they are describing, they are going to change the face of education.” – Jesse Thorstad, technology specialist, District 544 and IQ Academy, Star Tribune, October 6, 2011

¹ *Strained schools face bleak future*, Kober, N. & Rentner, D.S., June 2011 as seen in *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 2011

² Jack Gordon, *Are the Taxes Always Greener?*, *Twin Cities Business*, October

³ Ernst & Young analysis of business tax burdens – *Star Tribune* November 18, 2011

⁴ *Bully-proofing your kids*, Katia Hetter, CNN, October 11, 2011

⁵ AARP, Commonwealth Fund and Scan Foundation. Full report at longtermscorecard.org

These materials are provided by:
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