



## Bits 'n Pieces Spring 2006

### Just the Facts

#### School Choice

- ◆ Nationally, far more public school students take AP classes and exams than private school students do”... (What Matters to Us, Public Education, MPLS.ST.PAUL Magazine, January 2006)
- ◆ Public school students do as well as or significantly better in Math than comparable students in private schools according to the largest government study ever done on the topic including 340,000 students in regular public, charter and private schools. *Researchers compare math scores rather than reading scores because math is considered a clearer measure of a school's overall effectiveness.*
- ◆ Public schools “excel in exceedingly difficult areas, such as accelerated academics, the integration of immigrant populations and the education of students with special needs...[and] In fact, contrary to widespread belief, most ‘normal’ kids from stable backgrounds thrive there.” (What Matters to Us, Public Education, MPLS.ST.PAUL Magazine, January 2006)
- ◆ Despite disappointing charter school records, Minnesota has more charter schools than all but eight states. (No Small Change, Education Week, Targeting Money Toward Student Performance, 2005)
- ◆ Current studies show that self-described conservative Christian schools, the fastest-growing sector of private schools, fared poorest, with their students falling as much as one year behind their counterparts in public schools, once factors like income, ethnicity and access to books and computers at home were considered. (Public-School Students Score Well in Math in Large-Scale Government Study, Diana Jean Schemo, The New York Times, January 28, 2006)

#### Parenting

- ◆ Sixth-graders who do not attend school regularly, receive poor behavior marks, or fail math or English have only a 10% chance of graduating on time.
- ◆ Because of the dramatic increase in obesity rates the overall health of young people has decreased steadily since 1975. (The foundation for Child Development)
- ◆ “Much of the work of asset building occurs for free. It is the stuff people do in their everyday lives.” (Peter Benson, Ph.D., All Kids Are Our Kids)

#### Red Flags


- ◆ Minnesota's expenditures for public school administration are near the bottom with only Utah and Mississippi investing less. (American School Board Journal, Education Vital Signs, 2006)
- ◆ Minnesota ranks 25<sup>th</sup> on the spending index, which reflects both the percentage of students in districts spending at or above the national average and how far the rest are below that average. (No Small Change, Education Week, Targeting Money Toward Student Performance, 2005)
- ◆ Only the District of Columbia and Florida, had a smaller increase in education spending per student between 2001 and 2002 (most recent figures provided available, Quality Counts, 2005).
- ◆ “A growing body of research by respected and private policy analysts finds Minnesota just isn't keeping up with innovative regions that are putting muscle into long-term investment.” (Downward slide, St. Paul Pioneer Press, October 5, 2005)
- ◆ Minnesota schools have laid off 4,000 teachers in the last four years and classrooms are becoming more crowded.
- ◆ 10,000 families have lost subsidies to pay for high-quality child care and preschools.
- ◆ “An avalanche of data shows the region's overall grade point average slipping from B to B- since 2003, owing largely to partisan paralysis at the State Capitol that has prevented competitive investments...” (B-minus, Star Tribune, September 25, 2005)
- ◆ The [Minnesota] state economy is actually producing fewer jobs today than it did a decade ago. (Minnesota Slowdown, Dave Hage, Star Tribune, February 5, 2006)

#### Values and Variables

- ◆ “Focus on what matters. Here's a hint: The future of our state is not inextricably linked to guns, gays, gambling or gametes. Give those divisive issues a rest and tackle the truly important

challenges, like health care, education and transportation.” (John Gunyou, former Minnesota finance commissioner, and current Minnetonka city manager)

- ◆ Per capita wealth in the United States exceeds that of each of the other G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom)
- ◆ Per capita income has decelerated from about 5.7 percent annual growth in the 1990’s to 4 .1 percent since 2002.
- ◆ Job growth in Minnesota has fallen short of the national pace. (Steve Hine, labor market research director at the Department of Employment and Economic Development)
- ◆ University of Minnesota men’s football coach Glen Mason will receive an annual salary of \$1.65 million plus up to \$175,000 in performance bonuses.
- ◆ The annual compensation for Breck School’s headmaster is \$297,932, far more than the compensation of the superintendents of entire school districts that have many more students, employees, programs and larger budgets to manage.
- ◆ One in eleven Minnesota children lived in a family at or below the poverty level in 2000. (By the Numbers, Minneapolis Star Tribune, January 8, 2005)



## **Bragging Rights\***

- ◆ The United States, second only to Finland, produces more engineers per capita than China or India.
- ◆ 22 of the top 30 universities in the world are American.
- ◆ Teachers in Minnesota’s public schools are more likely to teach the core subjects for which they are prepared than teachers in any other state. (No Small Change, Targeting Money Toward Student Performance, Quality Counts, 2005)
- ◆ “The United States is the productivity leader in virtually every industry.” – William W. Lewis, founding director of the McKinsey Global Institute
- ◆ Minnesota recently earned a perfect score on the 2006 Development Report Card

## **Quotes and Quotables**

### **Leadership**

- ◆ “Respect the advice of your professionals, even when you don’t like what they have to say. We’re not the enemy. We’re just trying to make sure there’s sound public policy beneath that thin veneer of press-release politics.” John Gunyou, former Minnesota finance commissioner, and current Minnetonka city manager.
- ◆ “Few people are successful unless a lot of other people want them to be.” – Charles Brower
- ◆ “Pressure is a privilege, it only comes to those who earn it.” – Billie Jean King
- ◆ “In short, a change imposed is a change opposed.” Spencer Johnson
- ◆ “Your character is the anchor that grounds you, the compass that guides you, and the magnet that draws others to you.” Sara Jane Radin
- ◆ “If it appears I can see further than others, it is because I am standing on the shoulders of giants.” – Sir Isaac Newton
- ◆ “You do not lead by hitting people over the head—that’s assault, not leadership.” President Dwight Eisenhower

### **Citizenship**

- ◆ “Civilization is the long process of learning to be kind.” Jennifer James
- ◆ A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under whose shade they will never sit.” – Greek proverb
- ◆ “Caring can be learned by all human beings, can be worked into the design of every life, meeting an individual need as well as a pervasive need in society.” – Mary Catherin Bateson

### **Progress**

- ◆ “You’ve removed most of the roadblocks to success when you’ve learned the difference between motion and direction.” – Bill Copeland
- ◆ “Nobody succeeds beyond his or her wildest expectations unless he or she begins with some wild expectations.” – Ralph Charell
- ◆ “Minnesotans have long thought that education, health care, quality preschool and other fine public services were not just the hallmarks of a cohesive society, but sound investments in the state’s long-

term prosperity. They're still waiting for evidence that they were wrong." (Dave Hage, Minnesota Slowdown, Star Tribune, February 5, 2006)

## Education

- ◆ "It would be wonderful to have more teachers and computers—but would you want them at the expense of school counselors, nurses, librarians, or diesel fuel for your buses?" (Education Vital Signs, 2006 – regarding the 65 cent solution or 70 cent solution that has been proposed for Minnesota by Governor Pawlenty)
- ◆ "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." – President Franklin D. Roosevelt
- ◆ "A quiet revolution is taking place across America, placing a premium on our greatest natural resource—the human mind." Art Costa
- ◆ "If you believe they don't want to learn, they won't learn." – Harry Wong
- ◆ "Programs don't get kids to succeed—it is the teacher that gets kids to succeed." – Art Costa
- ◆ "Our historic investment in public education has paid off, handsomely, in stellar academic achievement, social integration, and economic success. Turning our back on that tradition would be a colossal blunder." (What Matters to Us, Public Education, MPLS.ST.PAUL Magazine, January 2006)

## Communications

- ◆ "The inability of public education to tell a compelling story is why we're in trouble." – Jennifer James
- ◆ "If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect." – Benjamin Franklin
- ◆ "Information voids will be filled by rumors and speculation unless they are preempted by open, credible and trustworthy communication." – Jean B. Keffeler

## Just for Fun

- ◆ "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape." Michael McGriffy



These materials are provided by:  
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