

sai REPORT

Leadership for Learning

Administrators of the Year Selected

The recipients of 2010 Administrator of the Year have been selected. Educational leaders Deidre Drees, Terry Hurlburt, Joel Pedersen, Helen Snell and Roger Wilcox were selected by their peers, and join Assistant Secondary Principal of the Year Diane Campbell of Muscatine, and Superintendent of the Year Jere Vyverberg of Waverly-Shell Rock, who were featured in previous issues. All of these outstanding administrators will be recognized at the Governor's Reception at the State Capitol this month.



Roger Wilcox
Waverly-Shell
Rock

Arts Administrator - *Roger Wilcox, Waverly-Shell Rock*

Selection Committee: Members of the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education board select the recipient.



Helen Snell,
Maquoketa

Central Office Administrator - *Helen Snell, Maquoketa*

Selection Committee: Ron Dimiig, Council Bluffs; Lowell Ernst, Pella; Tracy Morrison, Maquoketa Valley; and Jill Van Woerkom, Knoxville.



Terry Hurlburt
Waukeke

Elementary Principal - *Terry Hurlburt, Waukeke*

Finalists: Brad Baker, Creston; and Christi Lines, Waverly-Shell Rock.

Nominees: Michael Jurgensen, Marshalltown; Steve Putz, Forest City; Shirley Sovereign, Howard-Winneshiek; and Dan Vogeler, Columbus.

Selection Committee: Vicki Connelly, Muscatine; Troy Lentell, Central; Leah Morris, Southeast Polk; Kim Tierney, Denver; and Nathan Wear, Fairfield.



Terry Hurlburt
Waukeke

Middle Level Principal - *Joel Pedersen, Davis Co.*

Finalists: Christopher Billings, Gilbert; and Terry Hogenson, Muscatine.

Nominees: Leona Hoth, Decorah; and Bob Pattee, Humboldt.

Selection Committee: Cindy Barwick, Sheldon; Brian Carico, Johnston; Mark Farland, Cedar Falls; Denise Philipp, IKM; and Brian Strusz, Pleasant Valley.



Joel Pedersen
Davis Co.

Secondary Principal - *Deidre Drees, Missouri Valley*

Finalists: Jane Artman-Andrews, Davenport; and John Johnson, West Central.

Nominees: Kent Jorgensen, Corning; and Greg Vander Lugt, Western Dubuque.

Selection Committee: Russ Adams, MOC-Floyd Valley; Dale Barnhill, Norwalk; Ed Berry, MFL-Mar Mac; Jay Mathis, Clear Lake; Deb Taylor, Nishna Valley; Mark Vervaecke, Maquoketa; and Lori Westhoff, Humboldt.



Deidre Drees
Missouri Valley

All recipients were asked for their insight on specific questions related to education and leadership. Read their answers beginning on page 8.

The selection process for 2011 is underway with SAI Districts' nominations due at the SAI office by June 30, 2010.

"If we are facing in the right direction, all we have to do is keep on walking."

~ Buddhist saying

SAI STAFF

Associate Executive Director
Dr. Bonnie Boothroy
bboothroy@sai-iowa.org

Business Manager
Cyndi Petersen
cpetersen@sai-iowa.org

Communications Director
Tracy J. Harms
tharms@sai-iowa.org

Executive Assistant
Jody Linkenhoker
jlinkenhoker@sai-iowa.org

Executive Director
Dr. Dan Smith
dsmith@sai-iowa.org

Gov. Relations Director
Dr. Ben Norman
benorman@mchsi.com

Iowa Statewide PIRC Director
Ed Redalen
eredalen@mchsi.com

IPERS Representative
Dr. Gaylord Tryon
gaylord@sai-iowa.org

Legal Services Director
Matt Carver, J.D.
mcarver@sai-iowa.org

Professional Dev. Director
Kathleen Reyner
ksreyner@sai-iowa.org

Program Assistant
Amy Swanson
aswanson@sai-iowa.org

Program Assistant
Cheri Wigger
cwigger@sai-iowa.org

Receptionist/Secretary
Debbie Wrenn
dwrenn@sai-iowa.org

Wallace Grant Director
Dr. Troyce Fisher
troyce@sai-iowa.org

SAI OFFICERS

President
Theron Schutte, superintendent
Bettendorf Community School District
tschutte@bettendorf.k12.ia.us

President-elect
Linda Reysack, elementary principal
Cedar Rapids Community School District
lreysack@cr.k12.ia.us

Vice President
Angela Huseman, high school principal
Tri-Center Community School District
ahuseman@tri-center.k12.ia.us

Past President
Brad Buck, assistant superintendent
Waukee Community School District
bbuck@waukee.k12.ia.us

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

NAESP State Rep.
Paul Wenger, principal
Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary
pwenger@edge-cole.k12.ia.us

NASSP State Coordinator
Todd Wolverton, principal
North Fayette High School
twolverton@n-fayette.k12.ia.us



Executive Director's Message from Dan Smith

The Worst Hard Times or the New Normal?

“Be grateful for luck, but don’t depend on it.” William Feather

As I talk with school administrators this Spring I repeatedly hear how truly difficult it is to be a school leader in these times. Normal, necessary decisions are challenged. Difficult, long-term decisions often result in emotional and personal attacks.

Few people who are not in leadership roles understand how much work, planning, and soul searching goes into these decisions. Many people resort to unfair stereotyping of administrators and assume that decisions are made for reasons other than necessity and the long-term interest of students.

Some school leaders have shared with me that these are among the worst times to be a school administrator. Our hope is that things will get better in the near future.

Unfortunately, the reality is that good times will probably not return any time soon. While signs of economic recovery exist, those signs are not likely to translate into large revenue increases in the next year or so.

In fact, the actual projections for Iowa and the nation are bleak. An April 5 article in *The Des Moines Register* stated that the Iowa legislature decided to pay nearly \$725 million of the state’s expenses for next year with what are considered one-time sources of income. Also, when lawmakers return in January 2011 to plan for the budget year that begins July 1, 2011, they won’t be able to rely upon federal stimulus money and will have a projected \$204.1 million in cash reserves. Even if the economy continues to improve, revenue would have to beat projections by 14 percent to make up for all the one-time money.

On the national level an AASA survey conducted in March reported that

- stopgap efforts to avoid personnel cuts were short-lived. Personnel costs are commonly understood to represent more than 80 percent of most school districts’ budgets. Personnel reductions are anticipated to increase in the 2010-11 school year.
- more than two-thirds (68 percent) of respondents cut positions in 2009-10, and 90 percent anticipate having to do so in 2010-11.
- regardless of the much appreciated ARRA dollars, which were used to save an average of 20 positions per school, districts report eliminating, on average, 29 positions over the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years.
- the percentage of respondents reducing benefits packages has skyrocketed: 46 percent of respondents will reduce health-care benefits in 2010-11, compared to 12 percent in 2009-10 and 5 percent in 2008-09. Similarly, 20 percent of respondents will reduce pension contributions in 2010-11, compared to 3 percent in 2009-10 and 0.7 percent in 2008-09.

The increasing intensity of budget cuts for the 2010-11 school year reaches beyond personnel decisions.

- Students will soon be more crowded in their classrooms: While 9 percent of respondents increased class size in the 2008-09 school year, that number nearly tripled to 26 percent in 2009-10 and is anticipated to more than double to 62 percent for 2010-11.
- After holding steady at two percent for both 2008-09 and 2009-10, the percentage of respondents considering reducing operations to a four-day school week (during the school year) mushroomed to 13 percent in 2010-11.
- More than one-third (34 percent) of respondents are considering eliminating summer school for the 2010-11 school year, a rate that has roughly doubled each year, from 8 percent in 2008-09 to 14 percent in 2009-10.

None of this is a surprise to Iowa school leaders. But the reality is that we must calibrate our response to these difficult times so that we are aware that the “new normal” will require a mindset that constantly considers the economic aspect of all decisions.

We must also realize that leadership will be the critical factor in pulling Iowa’s schools through this difficult time. Throughout history the importance of leadership in the face of adversity has been shown time and again. While you may justifiably feel discouraged and overwhelmed at times, it is important that you work with your staff and community with an attitude that portrays you will persevere.

SAI is a partner with you in these difficult times. We know that your resources will be even more scarce and your responsibilities even greater in these difficult times. SAI is lucky to have the opportunity to serve you in these hard times and will continue to work for your success. Never hesitate to contact SAI staff members; we’re here for you, and we’re here because of you.



In Brief

Congratulations to SAI's newly-elected Vice President Roark Horn



Roark Horn, Hudson CSD superintendent and incoming AEA 267 chief administrator, will begin his term September 1, 2010.

Thank you to the members who participated in the election!

At its April meeting, the SAI Executive Committee:

- was informed that the Principals Center Summer Institute is full, and that the 10 Superintendents' Networks will hold a joint meeting during the month;
- heard about the April Administrative Assistants Seminar featuring standards, use of technology applications and legal issues; and progress toward finalizing the Annual Conference;
- learned that next year's vice president election will likely be held electronically as the prospective service cost has decreased;
- was updated on the April 28 Spring Legal Lab. Topics include attendance, student and staff interaction and personal use of public resources. Also, the Quick Facts sheet is finished [see example on pages 4-5 of this issue];
- was told that the legislature accepted the Benefit Advisory Committee's recommendations for the IPERS program. The SAI Executive and IPERS committees will meet May 19 to hear a presentation by IPERS staff;
- received information on Wallace activities which include optimism about receiving an i3 grant for the National SAMs Project. If the grant is received, SAI will manage finances for the Iowa SAMs project. Also, the Evaluator Training redesign is challenging due to RTTT and ESEA requirements for identifying highly effective and effective teachers and principals;
- elected Paul Wenger of Edgewood-Colesburg NAESP State Representative and Todd Wolverton of North Fayette NASSP State Coordinator;
- reviewed SAI's key challenges and brainstormed solutions at the March Representative Council meeting. The Executive Committee will identify two or three action items for both short- and long-term challenges in May.

Give us your feedback*

April Results

Does your district have formal homework policies?

Yes 25%

No 75%

Have you recently or will you soon review with staff the type and amount of homework given?

Yes 75%

No 25%

This month's question:

Are you making tech training available for teachers?

Provide your answer at <http://bit.ly/bmK7KW>

* This is an unscientific survey of volunteer participants and is not a valid statistical sample.

National Children's Book of the Year Contest

The National Association of Elementary School Principals Foundation has launched a contest for aspiring children's book authors. The winning authors will have their books endorsed by the NAESP Foundation and published by Charlesbridge Publishing.

Prospective authors may choose to publish a picture book or a chapter book written for children from 3-16 years of age. Five finalists will be selected in each category and two winners will be announced at the 2011 Annual Convention and receive a contract to publish his/her books.

Judging is based on content, originality, and age-appropriateness of the manuscript. Go to <http://bit.ly/9EOyrZ> for more information.

Fort Dodge Superintendent Receives Youth Development Award

Superintendent Linda Brock of the Fort Dodge Community School District received the second annual Harkin PROSPER (PROMoting School-community-university Partnership to Enhance Resiliency) Award April 30.

The award was initiated to recognize leaders who have made significant contributions toward the advancement of positive youth development in Iowa using scientifically-proven approaches. Sen. Tom Harkin and his wife, Ruth, were selected as the first recipients of this award for their contributions to healthy youth and families, prevention efforts and education.

Brock was nominated for her leadership and support of the PROSPER Partnership Model. It is scientifically-proven for delivering evidence-based prevention programs to middle school youth and their families. The benefits of using this model include improved family functioning, reduced youth substance use and conduct problems, improved academic performance and improved work-related life skills.

Upcoming Events

May

12 - How To Stay Focused on Teaching and Learning In Tough Economic Times facilitated by Dr. Allen Odden, Sheraton West Des Moines

13 - How To Stay Focused on Teaching and Learning In Tough Economic Times facilitated by Dr. Allen Odden, Sheraton West Des Moines

June

10-11 - Technology Boot Camp for Administrators, Scheman Bldg., Ames

14-15 - AEA Leaders Conference, West Des Moines Marriott

23-24 - Iowa Leadership Academy Principals Center Summer Institute, Sheraton West Des Moines

July

12 - New Superintendents Institute (tentative)
19 - New Administrators Institute, Sheraton West Des Moines

August

4 & 5 - SAI Annual Conference and Exhibits, Polk County Convention Complex, Des Moines

Find registration information and learn about future offerings at www.sai-iowa.org/events

sai REPORT

The *SAI Report* is published for association members and selected community and business leaders by School Administrators of Iowa. The views expressed in the *SAI Report* do not necessarily reflect SAI opinion nor does acceptance of advertising imply SAI endorsement.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Tracy J. Harms, editor

School Administrators of Iowa
12199 Stratford Drive
Clive, IA 50325-8146

Phone: (515) 267-1115
FAX: (515) 267-1066
www.sai-iowa.org



by Matt Carver, Director of Legal Services

A Year* in the Making

*Plus two

This article is intended only as a reference in regard to the subject matter covered. It is furnished with the understanding that SAI is not engaged in rendering legal advice. If a legal opinion is desired, private legal counsel should be consulted.

Length of time it took to complete:

- Panama Canal – 34 years and 6 days
- Taj Mahal – 22 years
- Pyramid of Djoser (Egypt) – 19 years
- Channel Tunnel (between Great Britain and France) – 6 years and 6 months
- Golden Gate Bridge – 4 years and 3 months
- Matt Carver's SAI Important Dates and Numbers Guide – 3 years and 4 months
- Eiffel Tower – 2 years
- Empire State Building – 1 year and 4 months

Within my first week of work at SAI it struck me that administrators might find it helpful to have a quick reference guide for those hard-to-remember numbers and dates, much like the laminated outlines sold in university bookstores (not that I ever used such things). This was placed on my to-do (or not to-do) list and even made its way onto SAI's Planning Framework, which the staff uses to focus efforts each year. Needless to say, when my dates and numbers guide was not completed within the time it took to construct the Eiffel Tower, I received some rather ruthless ribbing from fellow staff (this harassment occurred despite the fact that they knew my Cubs and Irish were continuing to waste away in sports purgatory). Finally, I set a hard deadline for completion of the guide and vowed to wear a rival team's gear to work if I failed to meet that date. With this motivation in mind, the guide finally came to fruition. Heck, I was faster than those slackers building the Golden Gate Bridge.

So, what is this SAI Important Dates and Numbers Guide? It is a three-page outline that contains miscellaneous information, primarily from the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code, regarding education law. You may decide to print it out and put it in your desk drawer or computer bag, or prefer to review the information online. In either case, you may find the current version of the guide here: <http://bit.ly/daxdnl>.

Here is a sampling of the type of information you will find in the guide:

Important Dates

August

26 - The parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian of a child of compulsory attendance age who does not enroll the child in a public school or Iowa accredited nonpublic school shall complete a report in duplicate on forms created by the department of education and provided by the resident public school district, indicating the parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian's intent to provide or arrange for competent private instruction for the child for each school year. The report shall be filed with the school board secretary by August 26, except as otherwise provided by these rules. (IAC 281-31.2(1))

September

1 - a parent/guardian requesting to enroll a kindergarten pupil in a district other than the district of residence may make such application on or before September 1 of that school year. (IAC 281-17.7)
15 - Students must be 5 years old on or before this date to enroll in kindergarten. (Iowa Code §282.6)
A child who has reached the age of six and is under sixteen years of age by September 15 is of compulsory attendance age. If a student turns 16 years old on or after this date, s/he is of compulsory age for the remainder of the school year. (Iowa Code §299.1A)

October

15 – Deadline for submission of Project EASIER (Electronic Access System for Iowa Education Records) to DE.

March

1 - On or before March 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which open enrollment is requested, a parent/guardian shall formally notify both the district of residence and the receiving district of the request for open enrollment. The request for open enrollment shall be made on forms provided by the department of education. (IAC 281-17.3(1))
15 - Earliest date school districts may offer contracts to teachers. (Iowa Code §279.13)

June

1 - The board of the receiving district shall act on an open enrollment request no later than June 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which the request is made. (IAC 281-17.3(2))

30 - The Board of Educational Examiners will not find that a practitioner abandoned a contract if:

The practitioner obtained a release from the employing board before discontinuing services under the contract; or (2) The practitioner provided notice to the employing board no later than the latest of the following dates: 1. The practitioner's last work day of the school year; 2. The date set for return of the contract as specified in statute; or 3. June 30. (IAC 282 – 25.3(5)b.(2))

Important Numbers

2x - Pupil bus safety instruction. At least twice during each school year, each pupil who is transported in a school vehicle shall be instructed in safe riding practices and participate in emergency evacuation drills. (IAC 281 - 43.40)

3 years - The first three consecutive years of employment of a teacher in the same school district are a probationary period. However, if the teacher has successfully completed a probationary period of employment for another school district located in Iowa, the probationary period in the current district of employment shall not exceed one year. A board of directors may waive the probationary period for any teacher who previously has served a probationary period in another school district and the board may extend the probationary period for an additional year with the consent of the teacher. (Iowa Code §279.19)

3 years - Teachers and administrators should receive comprehensive evaluations at least every three years. (Iowa Code Ch. 284 & 284A)

3 school days - The student's parent or guardian must be provided a written copy of the [physical confinement and restraint] documentation . . . , which shall be postmarked within three school days of the occurrence. The student's parent or guardian may elect, in writing, to receive the communication required by this numbered paragraph via electronic mail or facsimile transmission. (IAC 281 – 103.7(7)) The public school, accredited nonpublic school, or area education agency shall attempt to notify a child's parent or guardian on the same day the child is subjected to physical restraint or physical confinement and detention; (IAC 281 – 103.7(6))

5 consecutive days - A substitute authorization allows an individual to substitute in a middle school, junior high school, or high school for no more than five consecutive days in one job assignment. (IAC 282 – 22.2)

5" - Knives GREATER THAN 5 inches are classified as "dangerous weapons" in Iowa. (Iowa Code §702.7)(shorter lengths are still weapons)

21 years old - Students are entitled to a tuition-free education until they turn 21 years old. (Iowa Code §282.6 – see exceptions for students over 21)

60 minutes - The riding time, under normal conditions, from the designated stop to the attendance center, or on the return trip, shall not exceed 60 minutes for elementary pupils. (IAC 281 – 43.1(3))

90 days - A substitute license is valid for five years and for not more than 90 days of teaching in one assignment during any one school year. A school district administrator may file a written request with the board [BoEE] for an extension of the 90-day limit in one assignment on the basis of documented need and benefit to the instructional program. The board [BoEE] will review the request and provide a written decision either approving or denying the request. (IAC 282 - 13.16(2))

300 feet - A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor shall not . . . loiter within three hundred feet of the real property boundary of a public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school, unless enrolled as a student at the school. [Such offenders must otherwise meet a statutory exception.] (Iowa Code §692A.113)

Again, these are just some samplings from the guide.

If you have any dates or numbers that you feel other administrators would find beneficial, don't hesitate to shoot me an email with your thoughts, or pick up the phone and give me a call.

Please note the fancy legal disclaimer at the top of the guide. While I will update the guide at least annually, the laws and regulations change more frequently than that, and your master contract or district policy may impose deadlines or requirements that may go beyond what Iowa law requires. As such, don't hesitate to contact your school attorney when you are going to make a decision that may cost the district money if you get it wrong.

Hopefully you will find this guide helpful. Like the Channel Tunnel or the Taj Mahal, I see its completion as a sign of perseverance in the face of adversity. What's that? There is another "p" word that comes to your mind?! Let's try to keep things positive. Summer is drawing near.

I look forward to seeing everybody at SAI in August. We are back to our normal, early August dates, since there is no AAU Junior Olympics in Des Moines this year. Until then, don't forget to root for those Cubbies.



Iowa PIRC Recognized Nationally for Parent Engagement

“The report cited 12 national examples considered ‘leading innovations in the family involvement field to advance student learning.’”

The Iowa Parent Information Resource Center has received national recognition for its innovation in developing a program that advances student learning through parental and family involvement.

The Iowa PIRC was included in a recent report by the National Family, School and Community Engagement Working Group for one of its “breakthrough strategies:” a program called Iowa’s Sustaining Parental Involvement Network, known as iSPIN. The report cited 12 national examples considered “leading innovations in the family involvement field to advance student learning.”

“To have our work recognized as an innovative program at the national level is a testament to the hard work of our project partners, especially the work of parents and school staff in our iSPIN sites across Iowa,” said Ron Mirr, a consultant with the Iowa PIRC who works with iSPIN schools and other programs.

The national working group is a leadership collaborative through the Harvard Family Research Project that works to develop and implement policies designed to engage families and community members in schools. It includes renowned education scholars and professionals who study the effects of parental involvement in the academic success of children.

iSPIN is a program that Iowa schools began implementing in 2008. Twenty-six schools throughout the state now use the program. It requires schools to focus on family engagement for at least two years and sets minimum requirements to which schools must commit in order to increase their family involvement. Iowa PIRC provides the training and other support for schools to implement the program.

“Partnering with Iowa schools on increasing parental engagement in their children’s learning is rewarding professional work,” said Ed Redalen, director of the Iowa PIRC. “We have testimonials and documented outcomes from our school partners that demonstrate when they view parental engagement as a strategy for student achievement they in turn make significant changes in how they are involving parents in the educational process.”

PIRC leaders are now in the process of studying the effects of iSPIN at participating schools. Initial evaluations show an increase in parental involvement at home and in school, along with wider acceptance and improved attitudes among teachers and administrators about involving parents.

iSPIN is an Iowa-derived model based on an Academic Development Institute program called Solid Foundation. ADI is an Illinois group that works to link families, communities and schools. Schools that participated in Solid Foundation have shown significantly higher levels of improved student learning over schools that have not participated in the program.

The Iowa PIRC has worked since 1995 to increase parental involvement in Iowa, with an emphasis on helping school officials engage families in ways that best support student learning, Mirr said.

There is a growing consensus across the country that innovation through new approaches and strategies are necessary to improve public education, according to the report. The U.S. Department of Education in 2009 implemented the Investing in Innovation Fund to assist school districts and other groups that “invest in the creation of breakthrough models that are going to change outcomes for students, teachers and productivity ... and to make systemic changes to foster innovation in education,” said James Shelton III, the assistant deputy secretary for innovation and improvement.

The working group compiled 12 national examples of leading innovation, as a result of the increased attention on the role innovation plays in advancing student learning. Each example was developed through problem-solving and attention to families and ever-changing opportunities and challenges in helping students succeed.

Iowa’s PIRC made the list because it “has been particularly successful in creating an infrastructure for family engagement by providing leadership and guidance at the state level, and by helping to adapt an evidence-based model for family involvement that all Iowa schools can use,” the working group wrote in its spring report. In addition, Iowa’s PIRC was cited for its work to integrate parental engagement into standards for administrators and teachers and to include them in assessment of school leaders.

To read the full report and learn more about the National Family, School and Community Engagement Working Group, go to www.hfrp.org/workinggroup.



It's a Year Later: How did you do?

by Scott McLeod, CASTLE director

A year ago I said to the attendees of the annual AEA Leadership Conference, “Every day you will make choices that either reinforce the status quo or begin to create the new learning paradigm that is necessary for our graduates to be successful in the next half century. Unfortunately, most of your choices – for a variety of different reasons – will do the former rather than the latter. And thus the gap will widen as what we do here in Iowa fails to keep pace with the rapid and transformational changes that are occurring in society.”

It's a year later. AEA leaders, how did you do? How many of your choices this past year reinforced the status quo? How many facilitated creation of a new learning paradigm? What are you going to do differently next year?

[Building- and district-level leaders: How did you do?]

Put Some Pressure on Higher Education

This quote from Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, is devastatingly true (and is applicable to educational leadership programs too):

“Many, if not most, of the nation’s 1,450 schools, colleges and departments of education are doing a mediocre job of preparing teachers for the realities of the 21st-century classroom.”

When is the last time you contacted the deans of Colleges of Education, or the heads of those colleges’ Curriculum & Instruction and Educational Leadership programs? Are you satisfied with the educators that they’re sending you? Do their graduates have the skills they need to teach in and/or lead 21st century classrooms that prepare students for a globally-interconnected, technology-suffused information economy? If not, why are you hiring them? A little pressure from you on higher education would be good...

Summer Reading

Here are five things that every Iowa administrator should read over the summer:

1. Hamel – The Future of Management (<http://amzn.to/garyhamel>)
2. Hess – Education Unbound (<http://amzn.to/educationunbound>)
3. Collins & Halverson – Rethinking Education in the Age of Technology (<http://amzn.to/collinshalverson>)
4. New Media Consortium – 2010 K-12 Horizon Report (<http://wp.nmc.org/horizon-k12-2010>)
5. Futurelab – Digital Literacy Across the Curriculum (<http://bit.ly/futurelabdigitalalliteracy>)

1:1 Updates

Next year more than 40 Iowa school districts will be putting laptop computers into the hands of at least some of their students 24-7. Australia is doing the same thing nationwide with every secondary student. So is Portugal, and the State of Maine, and countless schools and districts across the world. Are you? Why not? Whose students do you think are going to be better prepared for the demands of a technology-suffused era?

The first-ever Iowa 1:1 Institute was a success. More than 500 attendees had a great learning experience, despite the Polk County Convention Complex’s Internet gateway dying the day of the institute. We’ll do it again on April 20, 2011. Save the date!

Remember that you can join the Iowa 1:1 Network at any time (<http://bit.ly/iowal1network>).

I hope that your school year winds down smoothly. It’s been a tough year. As always, please stay in touch (mcleod@iastate.edu)! FYI, I have a new phone number: 7077-CASTLE or 707-722-7853.

Don't miss the SAI and CASTLE Technology Boot Camp for Administrators, June 10 and 11, 2010, in Ames. More information is available on page 9.



Administrators of the Year

- continued from page 1

Roger Wilcox, Arts Administrator of the Year, Waverly-Shell Rock

What would you say to others who suggest that fine arts programs are something that schools cannot afford?

In tough financial times, it may be easier to look at “non-academic” areas as the first programs to cut, but several studies show that fine arts programs actually help improve academic achievement (www.amc-music.com/research_briefs.htm; www.menc.org/resources/view/academic-achievement-and-music; www.menc.org/resources/view/academic-achievement-and-music). Any article on the topic of arts education and student achievement clearly shows us that we can’t afford to eliminate these programs. It would be counterproductive!

Kids who are interested in the arts are many times non-traditional learners. What have you done to promote staff development that helps kids on the margins?

The Waverly-Shell Rock School District has a philosophy that everyone has talents and the ability to learn. Just like every other school district in the state, we have TAG students as well as those with developmental delays. We’ve had HS students who were selected as All-State performers play in a section of the HS orchestra with a special needs peer during a concert event. All faculty members K-12 work hard at trying to make students feel valued and part of the group. We work hard on differentiation because everyone is “differently-abled.” That belief stretches from the classroom to the potter’s wheel in art.

What important leadership behaviors have you learned from mentors you’ve had over the years?

I strongly believe that attitudes and relationships are paramount for a successful leader. Leaders need to construct positive relationships with everyone around them and exude an upbeat attitude that the glass is half full during even the most stressful situations. Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is still a great resource for me. Begin With the End in Mind, Seek First to Understand, Think Win-Win, and Sharpen the Saw (self-renewal and continual improvement) still resonate with me and guide my leadership style.

Helen Snell, Central Office Administrator of the Year, Maquoketa

How do you make time for professional development in your district?

Our district has provided full days of professional development for several years. The full days allow adequate time for staff to work on both building and district initiatives. Building and leadership teams use data to determine the content of professional development, and then develop Initiative Plans. Initiative Plans include intended outcomes, resources committed to the initiative, a timeline, plans for sustaining the initiative, and linkage to our Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Initiatives and updated progress are shared with our school board and the public throughout the year. In addition, professional development takes place on a consistent basis through Professional Learning Communities team meetings. The PLC model has led to increased collaboration time for teachers to examine student data, and to discuss and implement specific strategies for increasing student achievement. This on-going collaboration of teachers has led to more effective professional development for staff in our district.

Terry Hurlburt, Elementary Principal of the Year, Waukee

What are the most effective strategies you’ve helped staff use to increase achievement scores?

Over the past couple years, we have worked hard in Waukee and at Brookview Elementary to create and implement a teaching framework for meeting the needs of all students. The framework that has been developed specifically outlines the role of core, supplemental, and intensive instruction across three alterable components. Those three components address the program emphasis, instructional grouping patterns, and time spent delivering instruction. All teachers in our building have a matrix of the framework posted in their rooms that is used as a guide during weekly Professional Learning Communities. They work collaboratively to design instructional opportunities for differentiation as well as assessment tools to ensure we are meeting the needs of all of our students.

What are three must-read children’s books?

Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak – A wonderful story about the places your imagination can take you, accompanied with Caldecott winning illustrations.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Roald Dahl (or any book by Roald Dahl!) – Dahl is a master at using the rhyme and rhythm of words to tell the story of an underdog. This book is no exception as Dahl takes us through a world of mystery and adventure.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, J.K. Rowling - Who could ignore the magical tales of Harry Potter and the literary phenomenon that was started? J.K. Rowling has helped to create a new generation of readers!

Joel Pedersen, Middle Level Principal of the Year, Davis Co.

What are your views regarding school culture?

School culture is critical to the success of any school. There are two leadership principles that support a positive culture. First, school leaders should focus on continuous improvement. Secondly, school leaders should focus on their best teachers when making decisions. The combination of these two principles will support a positive school culture that focuses on increased student achievement.

As a goal, continuous improvement can create synergy within a school culture. School leaders should promote this goal on a regular basis. All stakeholders must embrace change and look for ways to improve instruction. School leaders should also be prepared to discuss their own professional development plans. The continuous improvement goal unites a school around quality professional development and individual improvement.

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The second annual statewide meeting of ILA Superintendents' Network participants was held April 21 in Johnston.

Approximately 80 administrators convened to deepen their learning of the instructional rounds process and to share practice among networks. Facilitators for the day were authors of *Instructional Rounds in Education*, Liz City, Richard Elmore and Lee Teitel from Harvard University.

Each of the 10 Iowa Superintendents' Networks uses a process called instructional rounds in which superintendents host day-long school visits. Superintendents learn how to develop a "problem of practice," engage in nonjudgmental classroom observations, use a protocol to debrief observations, and offer considerations for the next level of work. The primary learning goals of rounds are 1) building skills of network members, and 2) supporting instructional improvement at the host site.

During the statewide meeting, Elmore addressed the relationship between instructional rounds and whole school/district reform. He said that for best results, instructional rounds should occur in a system that has committed itself to an improvement strategy with a continuous improvement orientation. Why observe in classrooms? Because knowing what a good classroom looks like allows you to design the school and the system to support that classroom work.

He suggested that district leaders need to address the following questions in order to build a system improvement strategy from the ground up.

- What do people need to know to do the work?
- Who is responsible for doing the work?
- How will we know we have been successful?
- Who is accountable for what? How?
- Who leads the work?

Throughout the day, network members shared and reflected on their practice. Many participants noted the progress networks have made in the past year. "I'm impressed with your work," said Dr. Elmore. Liz City added, "You are taking this work seriously. Your questions and comments indicate a deeper understanding of the instructional rounds practice."

Network participants recently completed an online survey, and selected responses are shown below. The percentage who agreed or strongly agreed:

- The practice of instructional rounds has focused conversation among my Network's members on learning and teaching. 97.3 percent
- The practice of instructional rounds has the potential to increase my ability to lead instructional improvement efforts in my district. 90.3 percent
- I value collaborating with other superintendents to improve teaching and learning. 94.4 percent
- I am able to explain the concept "instructional core." 97.3 percent

Written comments:

"Participation in the IR process has provided me with valuable time to collaborate with my peers on the instruction that is taking place in our districts. In times when financial challenges and mandates from 'above' have a tendency to monopolize my time, it creates a focus on instruction that can too easily be pushed aside otherwise."

"The Superintendents' Network has the power to transform educational practice, and I hope we are able to grow the network and strengthen its effectiveness."

"I believe this work has the potential of changing staff development and student experiences more than any other initiative I have worked with, and ultimately has the potential of having a very positive impact on student learning."

"I have participated in this process for two years. I have learned a lot. This is one of the best professional learning opportunities that I have had in the 30 years I have been an educator."

Superintendents who are interested in joining their AEA's network should contact their AEA chief administrator. The Superintendents' Network is collaboratively sponsored by the AEA system and SAI, with support from The Wallace Foundation.



Dr. Elmore offers five questions for district leaders to address to build a system improvement strategy from the ground up.

sai Annual Conference

August 4 & 5, 2010
Polk Co. Convention Complex
Des Moines

Learning and Networking Opportunities

The Tues., Aug. 3 special conference session will focus on the Iowa Core with administrators from throughout the state discussing their progress. It will be a time to come together with your colleagues, collectively and in role-alike groups, to share strategies to implement the Iowa Core. Topics will include district and building visioning, and teacher leadership and assessment.

At August 5 special interest sessions, Iowans will also share

- strategies to improve literacy,
- Response to Intervention resource materials,
- reflections from 1:1 Schools,
- examples of Authentic Intellectual Work,
- discussion of Central Office descriptors,
- School Administration Manager programs,
- online learning opportunities,
- and more.

Annual conference brochures will be mailed later this month.

Technology Boot Camp for Administrators: More than BASIC training



Blogs. Wikis. Podcasts. YouTube. RSS. Social bookmarking, and more...

Do you know how to use them? Do you know how to create and share and collaborate and make these tools yours?

If you're tired of not understanding the new technologies, if you'd like to feel more empowered in this digital world of ours, or if you just want to upgrade some existing skill sets, then we've got a workshop for you!

It's a day and one-half designed to ramp up your skills with blogs, wikis, Twitter, YouTube, digital photography, Google Reader and RSS, Google Docs, Google Calendar, iGoogle, and more. We'll cover as much as we can in the time that we have, but we're going to take our time rather than rush. The emphasis will be on success and mastery.

"Tech Boot Camp" is scheduled 1-6 p.m. Thurs., June 10 and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Fri., June 11 at the Scheman Building in Ames.

This session, co-sponsored by SAI and CASTLE (Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education), is back by popular demand! Here's what your colleagues who have attended said:

- I'm still amazed at what I learned, and how much I really don't know about technology.
- Just being able to try everything you taught. The hands-on approach with this content is great.
- Variety, pace, and practical application—my brain is full.
- I learned more than I thought—you made it so easy!

Space is limited, sign up soon at www.sai-iowa.org/events!

Administrators of the Year

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School leaders should always seek input from a building leadership team. In *Fifteen Things That Matter the Most*, Todd Whitaker notes, "Before making any decision or attempting to bring about change, effective principals ask themselves one central question: What will my best teachers think?" A building leadership team can be helpful when looking at changes that may affect school culture. A quality leadership team will tell a school leader what it needs to hear, not what it wants to hear. The building will move in a positive direction as a result of quality dialogue. The best teachers will focus on what's best for an entire building. Mediocre teachers focus on what's best for their individual needs.

Deidre Drees, Secondary Principal of the Year, Missouri Valley

What about your high school are you most proud?

Without a doubt I am very proud of my staff and students for a number of reasons. The staff recognize that being an educator is not an eight to four profession. They have dedicated themselves to creating an engaging environment that fosters inquisitive learners who can effectively apply their learning in an ever changing world. The staff have taken responsibility for their own professional development and work collaboratively to align curriculum and instruction. They also engage in self reflection about their teaching and the level and types of tasks in which they ask students to engage. Because they've taken responsibility for their own professional development, they own their progress. This ownership has a direct effect on student performance and impacts more students than one classroom at a time. My vision and goal for staff is that we use our influence and skills to bring out the best in all of our students.

These same staff members also dedicate their time as sponsors and coaches to a number of co- and extra-curricular activities in which students are encouraged to become involved outside of the classroom. These activities provide opportunities for strong relationships between staff and students.

The Missouri Valley students have embraced these higher expectations and are becoming creators of their learning rather than just consumers. They are engaged in discussion, debate, making predictions and hypotheses, conducting research, and defending their findings. This is evidenced through increased student achievement (95 percent of students passing all classes for the past 1.5 years, scoring above the State NCLB trajectory, an above state average graduation rate; and 85 percent of students pursuing some type of post secondary education or training).

The district is led by a visionary superintendent and school board that encourage us to be innovative and risk takers as we continue to take initiative for providing quality learning for all of our students.