

THE RECORDER

NM Coalition of School Administrators Newsletter

November 2009



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of School Administrators

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The Importance of Professional Learning Communities

Excerpts taken from *The Adaptive School*
--Garmston & Wellman

On October 21, district leadership teams from around the state participated in the annual CES/NMCSA Educational Symposium (read more about the Symposium on p.4). The main topic of the Symposium was on a topic we began exploring in last month's Recorder—Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Tom Many, Superintendent in Kildeer Illinois presented a keynote on PLCs and the progress his district has made using PLCs. His definition of Professional Learning Communities is "a collaboration of teachers, administrators, parents and students who work together to seek out best practices, test them in the classroom, continuously improve processes and focus on results. He went on to say that the "big ideas of a PLC" include:

- A focus on learning
- A collaborative culture
- A results orientation

This supports the article included in the October issue of the Recorder. The following are the four other principles included in the Adaptive School and which reinforce Dr. Many's work in developing PLCs in his district.

A Collaborative Culture

Similarly authors Garmston and Wellman found that these elements listed above defined success in the PLCs they studied. They described a Collaborative Culture as one in which staff shares expertise and perspective on teaching and learning processes, examining data on students and

developing a sense of mutual support and shared responsibility for effective instruction. They also found that in high performing and improving schools collaboration is the norm. Collaboration and collegiality are part of one's "professional identity" and it has to be taught, practiced and learned. Developing collaborative cultures is the work of leaders who realize that a collection of superstar teachers working in isolation cannot produce the same results as interdependent colleagues who share and develop professional practices together.

Collaboration fuels group development when individual members envision a.) the potential of the group as a collective force in the school and b.) the expanding capacity of the group from accomplishing important work that individuals working in isolation would not be able to achieve.

Communal Application of Effective Teaching Practices and Deprivatized Practice

Far too many teachers still continue their practice of teaching in isolation rarely

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THE RECORDER

Tom's Tales



As I compose this article for November's "Recorder," the revised 2009-10 State Budget with obvious implications for public education, and several accompanying pieces of legislation crafted during the recently concluded special legislative session are awaiting action by the Governor.

Hopefully much of what I have to report to you now will still be accurate both when you read this and after the Governor acts.

First, though, some background: Prior to the start of the special session there were a series of meetings with legislative leadership groups and also the Governor at which NMCSA was represented- typically by designated superintendents, but also by principals and school business officials. At none of these sessions did our representatives "agree" to absorb any specific % reductions to school budget despite some reports to the contrary. In fact, the Superintendents' Association adopted and sent a formal position statement urging the preservation of the unit value and the development of an immediate plan to replace the federal stimulus money which was used this year to supplant state general fund support to education, while also suggesting savings from categorical programs first—those so called "below-the-line" accounts vs. those within the State Equalization Guarantee.

However, in response to various, hypothetical reduction scenarios presented to them by legislators, our folks did respond with ideas as to how Districts might be able to cope, and what relief and flexibility from some statutes and regulations would be necessary to allow all Districts to deal with their unique local circumstances. And when the Governor initially stated that he would support a no cuts to education position- as did many of our legislative friends- that became our public strategy. We were not going to give our "permission" to make deep cuts but rather react accordingly to whatever ultimately might occur.

Even after the Governor ceded ground to a modest 1.5 % cut to public education, many supportive legislators

continued to press for zero, even while we were fearing a much more drastic 3-3.5 % eventuality. When a compromise Bill-HB 17/33- emerged in the House Appropriations and Finance Committee that included a 2% reduction to the SEG, but was coupled with a creative way to return property liability insurance money to the Districts- in essence buying down the net effect of the reduction to less than even 1%, we were more than pleasantly surprised. After receiving some reassurance from those most supportive legislators that they would not feel betrayed, we only then spoke in favor of this compromise with the belief that there would be no chance to see any better proposals.

And we have continued to urge our members to contact the Governor's office –as we have already done on behalf of the Coalition- supporting the signing of this legislation. Although we have some concerns about some specific reductions to certain areas of our school budgets- our REC's, ed. tech. funds, instructional materials, transportation etc.- the alternatives which had been under consideration would have been dramatically worse for everyone.

As the saying goes: "That's my story and I'm sticking to it."

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The Importance of Professional Community

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venturing to share, model or consult with others who might assist them in developing their craft or expanding their repertoire of teaching strategies and ideas. When practice is “deprivatized”, teachers visit one another’s classrooms to observe master teaching, to coach each other, to mentor and to solve problems. Students become the beneficiaries of such shared teaching repertoires.

Relational Trust in One Another, In Students and in Parents
Hoy and colleagues (2006) have pointed out that collective efficacy is the cognitive side of student achievement, academic emphasis is the behavioral side and faculty trust in one another; in students and in parents is the affective side. Trust binds community members together whether they are our neighborhood communities, teacher communities, classroom communities or parent communities.

Bryk & Schneider (2002) in their work with Chicago schools name four elements of relational trust: respect, competence, personal regard for others and integrity.

Respect comes in the form of basic civility and a willingness to listen deeply about what each person has to say.

Competence is the sense that each party has the ability to carry out its appropriate roles and produce desired outcomes.

Personal regard for others deepens relational trust. Human beings are wired for relationships and reciprocity. Mutual support and mutual caring fuel these associations. Integrity is the congruence between saying and doing or “walking the talk” as we’re fond of saying. In trusting relationships we believe that a sense of morality and

ethics is operating in others and in the ways we are relating. Following through with agreements and commitments is a key aspect of integrity.

Individual and Group Learning Based on Ongoing Assessment and Feedback

Cognitive science tells us that learning is socially constructed and individually integrated; learning therefore requires engaging with other learners and is an active process for all involved. Individual and collective learning is a key characteristic of professional learning communities. For adult groups learning how to learn together requires conscious attention, purposeful structures and meaningful feedback.

One form of feedback occurs when teachers look at student work together to see what’s working and what might require modification in their curricular or instructional practice. Another form occurs when groups take time to reflect on their own processes and outcomes to determine which practices to continue, which to abandon and which to modify.

It was especially gratifying to learn during the Symposium in October that a large number of districts in New Mexico are involved in developing Professional Learning Communities. John Saphier indicates that “the reason professional learning communities increase student learning is that they produce more good teaching by more teachers more of the time.” Put simply, PLCs improve teaching, which improves student results, especially for the least advantaged students.” There is no better reason for implementing professional learning communities in every one of our schools.



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CES/NMCSA Annual Leadership Symposium

The district leadership teams that participated in the annual CES/NMCSA Leadership symposium were treated to two dynamic presentations which were timely and relevant to the work of increasing student achievement. As mentioned in the lead article, the keynote and the focus of the symposium was on the development and implementation of professional learning communities, however the morning's presentation was on the topic of "Defining a 'Culture of Accountability'". The presentation was made by Mike Evans and Dr. Craig Overmyer representing an organization called Chorus that has developed Hallmarks of Excellence in Educational Leadership. Hallmarks is a tool designed to help leaders and teams of leaders maximize their leadership effectiveness by capitalizing on their strengths and confronting areas needing further growth so they can achieve levels of higher performance. The attendees were provided with a variety of tools and were given the opportunity to both discuss the elements and uses of the tools and then think about and discuss how the tools might be useful for their own district's leadership teams. The main objectives of the day included learning how to leverage a strategic coaching dialogue to inspire accountability in others and developing a plan of action to create a leadership culture of accountability.

The presenters identified three leadership competencies common to all extraordinary leaders: Mastering your Core, Forging the Path and Ensuring Execution. Mastering your Core deals with unwavering personal values and integrity, emotional maturity and a commitment to continuous learning and personal growth; Forging the Path involves the ability to inspire people to accomplish great things by clearly seeing where the organizations needs to go and communicate a plan for getting there; and Ensuring Execution means simply "get it done"—a continuous engagement to ensure that the path is being followed to results.

The presentation also included the Essential Hallmarks which represent competencies and qualities essential for leading at a level of excellence:

Value Driven-Builds trust among educational and community stakeholders

Professional Acumen-Understands and manages personal emotions and respects the feelings and attitudes of others

Continuous Learning-Assumes responsibility for identifying learning needs. Displays commitment to continuous personal and professional development

Personal Discipline/Diligence-Commits to personal growth and disciplined work habits. Personally astute and aware of strengths and limitations.

Strategic Vision-Conceptualizes ideas and strategies modeled by national educational leaders rather than a corporate employee. Grasps a global-life view.

Effective Communication-Listens effectively, articulates ideas and influences people through clear, coherent written and oral communication.

Long Term Results-Possesses a personal culture with the ability to align and mobilize the school system's culture, resources and people in order to achieve the educational vision and goals in measurable ways.

Shared Management-Creates and models an empowering environment and strengthens diversity to realize the school system's successes and effectiveness

Servant Leadership-Commits to providing dedicated quality service and personal excellence for the benefit of others.

Hallmarks strives to being a transformational perspective by identifying and reinforcing principles of world-class educational leadership. For more information and to download some of the tools used at the training go to www.ehallmarks.com



NM School Superintendents' Legislative Position 2010 Session

At their statewide meeting last week, the Superintendents' organization approved the legislative platform for the upcoming session in January. Understanding that this is a 30 day session which will focus on budget and finance issues, most of the legislative packet focuses on these areas as well but also includes recommendations for addressing programmatic issues that continue to plague districts.

Pro Sufficiency: the NMSSA's priority will be to work with the Legislature on the imminent need to solve the State's existing revenue shortfall with minimal damage to the many varied and successful educational reforms adopted during the past several Sessions. However, we must remain mindful that a State sponsored study concluded that New Mexico's schools were being insufficiently funded by 15%.

School Financing: Any further cuts in the 2010 Session will have devastating effects on the school children of New Mexico and will further exacerbate the "funding cliff" facing us in FY12. Therefore, the NMSSA will strongly oppose any further decreases and respectfully requests the Legislature adopt and implement a plan that will assure educational funding to FY08 levels plus inflation. Without such a commitment and plan, public schools will face the likelihood of extensive personnel reductions, elimination of all non-required programs including alternative school, extended hour programs for credit recovery, and extra and co-curricular programs such as athletics, band, chorus, cheerleading, etc.

Revenue Increases: With budget and funding issues in mind, the NMSSA requests that the Legislature study and adopt measures that will increase funding from some or all of the following resources:

- Repeal of tax reduction to highest earning New Mexicans in 2010 (\$110-\$200 million)
- Increase GRT by ?-1% (up to \$450 million)
- Require combined reporting of corporate income taxes (\$60-\$100 million)
- Increase "sin" taxes by percentage or by volume (%/\$50 million)
- Rollback income tax deduction for state

and local taxes (\$60 million)

- Repeal GRT exemption on food and drugs, or at minimum reduce those items which are eligible for the exemption, e.g. soft drinks, candy, etc.
- Increase motor vehicle excise tax by 1% (\$35 million)
- Extend and expand the distribution from the Land Grant Permanent Fund

Programmatic Issues: NMSSA strongly supports the continued recurring funding of the 9 Regional Education Cooperatives' (REC's) basic operational expenses; maintaining their current statutory relationship with the PED; and allowing their ongoing exemption from the State Personnel Act.

NMSSA again respectfully asks for legislation permitting the statutorily required publication of District Report Cards to be done on-line while also continuing to make hard copies available to constituents upon request as a cost saving alternative to newspaper printing.

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NM School Superintendents' Legislative Position 2010 Session

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NMSSA respectfully requests that the legislature authorize no new programs of any kind related to public school operations, including new additional start-up Charter schools which do have a General Fund impact, until all existing programs and requirements have been fully funded and implemented effectively. NMSSA further requests that the legislature delay the expansion and implementation of any potentially unfunded and underfunded initiatives – e.g. Rtl, school calendar changes, instructional materials purchases etc.

NMSSA voices serious concern about the escalating costs and increasing types of mandatory testing, SBA, Short Cycle Assessments, College/Career Readiness etc., within both the state and federal accountability system; and asks the legislature to either authorize delays in their administration or shift the burden of payment for all mandatory testing from the districts to the PED.

NMSSA requests that the legislature grant the NM Secretary of Education broad authority to grant waivers to districts from existing statutes and regulations that have become increasingly more difficult with which to comply in the current economic environment.

NMCSA Student Scholarship

NMCSA will begin accepting applications for the two scholarships each for \$2000 that will be awarded to two graduating seniors. Applications will be sent out to all New Mexico high schools in November and are due back in February. Students will be interviewed in late March/early April and will be notified in early May so their names can be included in their school's awards ceremonies at the end of the school year. Please watch for the scholarship notice which is sent to high school principals and encourage students to apply. In the past three years we have received excellent applications from schools throughout the state. Scholarship winners have represented Albuquerque, Gadsden, Ruidoso and Mesa Vista.

Other:

NMSSA continues to ask for legislative oversight and support to improve the ability of the PED to quickly and accurately process district reimbursement requests –both state and federal, as it becomes increasingly more difficult for districts to “float” such expenses while awaiting these reimbursement dollars.

NMSSA respectfully requests a legislative Memorial to study the most effective means by which governmental agencies can coordinate and carry out their oversight responsibilities of the public schools. Current practices appear to be duplicative and inefficient for both the schools and agencies.

And finally, NMSSA endorses the concept of a Constitutional amendment that would grant the Legislature authority to review and possibly reverse any rule or regulation adopted by an administrative agency.

(Minor revisions possible before publication.)

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MetLife/NASSP National Principal of the Year Program

The MetLife/NASSP National Principal of the Year program recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals. The program annually honors secondary school principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession.

Selection Process

NMASSP is currently taking applications to select one middle level and one high school principal to represent New Mexico. From these state winners, six finalists are named as contenders for the National Principal of the Year award.

The 2010 MetLife/NASSP National Principals of the Year (one middle level and one high school) will be selected

from among the finalists and will receive a \$5,000 grant. The four finalists receive a \$1,500 grant.

Recognition

MetLife and NASSP honor all State Principals of the Year at the Principal's Institute and Awards Banquet held each year in Washington, DC. The Institute not only salutes the principalship but also provides a forum for honorees to share best practices and expertise.

For more information on the MetLife/NASSP Principal of the Year Program, contact Leisl Bauman, 800-253-7746 extension 308.

2011 Program

The 2011 MetLife/NASSP National Principal of the Year awards application is available at <http://www.nmassp.org/>

VICRO/NASSP Assistant Principal of the Year Program

NASSP and Virco partnered to applaud secondary school assistant principals in their dedication and success in school leadership. The NASSP/Virco National Assistant Principal of the Year program recognizes outstanding middle level and high school assistant principals who have demonstrated success in leadership, curriculum and personalization.

Selection Process

NMASSP will select one assistant principal to represent New Mexico. Three finalists are named as contenders for the National Assistant Principal of the Year award.

The NASSP/Virco National Assistant Principal of the Year is

selected from among the finalists, and receives a \$5,000 grant.

Recognition

NASSP and Virco, Inc. honor all State Assistant Principals of the Year at a Forum and Awards Banquet held each year in Washington DC. This event salutes assistant principals and provides an opportunity for them to share best practices and expertise with each other.

For more information on the NASSP/Virco National Assistant Principal of the Year Program, contact Leisl Bauman, 800-253-7746 extension 308 or visit <http://www.nmassp.org/>



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Multilingualism in New Mexico

--Excerpts taken from the article by Mary Jean **Haberman-Lopez**

Mary Jean Haberman Lopez is a well-known and respected educational leader in New Mexico. She is a former state bilingual director; a former board member of NMCSA and currently a board member with NMABE. Recently, her article on Multilingualism was featured in the national publication, *The Journal of Communication & Education Language Magazine*. Mary Jean provides an historical perspective on New Mexico's unique linguistic culture which includes Native American, Hispanic, Anglo and other ethnic groups and the fact that New Mexico is the only state where the Spanish language has been used continuously since the early Spanish settlements were established in 1598. She details the history of multilingualism in New Mexico dating from the pre-Spanish era when the languages used in New Mexico were Keres, Tewa, Tiwa, Towa and Zuni—the languages of the various Pueblos. Next came the Spanish settlements and the Spanish language became the lingua franca of the region. Spanish continued to be the general trade

language as New Mexico came under Mexican rule during 1821-1846. English was added to New Mexico's multilingual mix when the state was incorporated as a territory in 1848. New Mexico declared in its Constitution that English and Spanish were official languages. That provision was renewed in 1931 and again in 1943. The article goes on to chronicle the stages and history of bilingual education in New Mexico.

Our congratulations to NMABE and to Ms. Haberman-Lopez for her excellent work and research in writing this article. Bilingual education remains in the forefront of New Mexico's education landscape. This article helps us to understand the historical aspects of this initiative and why it will always be an important aspect of our schools. We hope New Mexico educators will read the full article in the September 2009 issue of the Language magazine.

2009 New Mexico FEA Conference December 4 & 5 at UNM Albuquerque

We are asking for your support. The 2009 Conference for New Mexico's Future Educators is rapidly approaching. This event contributes to our "Grow Your Own" efforts to recruit more well-qualified and diverse students into education careers in New Mexico.

Attached is a new Flyer we would like you to distribute in your school district and encourage your administrators, counselors, and teachers to promote this program. While it is identified as the 2009 New Mexico FEA (Future Educators Association) Conference, we want to invite any Future Teachers of America student and Advisor; high school educator curriculum class student or teacher; and any student who does not have an education group in their school. We also want to invite those school

administrators and teachers who are interested in finding out more about FEA and the Future educator Curriculum.

We would like to invite you to come and meet some of our aspiring future educators and listen to our Keynote Speaker Dr. Dominic Belmonte, President and CEO of the Golden Apple Foundation of Illinois and Author of *"Teaching from the Deep End: Succeeding with Today's Classroom Challenges"* at our Friday evening Banquet. Tickets can be obtained by contacting Pleddie Baker, FEA Conference Director, pleddie@zianet.com.



THE RECORDER

Calendar of Events 2009 - 2010

New Mexico K - 12 Principal's Conference

Nativo Lodge, Albuquerque
Nov. 6 and 7, 2009 - flyer attached

NMASBO 2010 Winter Conference - "Regulatory Training"

Albuquerque Hilton
February 17 - 19, 2010 - flyer attached

NMSBA Annual Conference

Hotel Albuquerque
December 4 and 5, 2009 - www.nmsba.org

Future Educators Association State Conference

UNM Main, Albuquerque
December 4 and 5, 2009 - flyer attached

PED / NMASBO Spring Budget Workshop

Hotel Albuquerque
March 22 - 24, 2010

NMCSA/NMPED Annual Conference

Hotel Albuquerque
July 26 - 28, 2010

NMCSA Staff:

Tom Sullivan, Executive Director
(505) 277-6989 • nmcsa@unm.edu

Carol S. Wood, Office Administrator
(505) 277-6986 • cswood@unm.edu

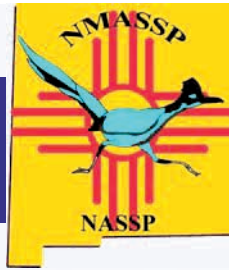
Dr. Gloria Rendón, Communications and
Leadership Development Coordinator
(505) 277-6985 • gorendon@unm.edu

Bud Mulcock, NMCSA Lobbyist
(505) 260-4792 • jamesbud@aol.com

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NEW MEXICO K-12 PRINCIPALS CONFERENCE

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NOVEMBER 7, 2009, 7:30 AM-12:00PM
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NMAASBO 2010 Winter Conference & Regulatory Training

February 17th, 18th, 19th, 2010

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All Sessions: Members \$200.00 – Non-Members \$250.00
After February 01, 2010 – add \$25.00 – Including Walk-ins
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Hotel Reservations: Group rates are available for this conference. The Albuquerque Hilton, 505-884-2500 or 800-274-6835 will give you a discounted rate of \$90.00 if you tell them that you will be attending NMAASBO's Winter Conference.