

2001: a MinnSPRA Odyssey  
through the looking glass  
of

1984

Today, 1984 is a dim memory of past days. Most of the letter and some of the senior class in our high schools were born in that long ago "Year of the School". Much technology and curriculum we take for granted today were known then, but who would have guessed the extent of change, for example, in use of technology in our schools. "Book" telephones in lecture classrooms were still manual; computers in the classroom were still almost unknown. Now e-mail and v-mail give such easy access they are sometimes considered a nuisance. Oh, how change impacts. What will we see in 2020? It's a relevant question for all of us to consider today.

The stories above, like positive school public relations, are timeless. Do take quality time to look back at what we thought was important in 1984. It is a great baseline from which to look forward in your own Odyssey of relationship with your public.

  
Dick Bernard, MinnSPRA president  
March 23, 2001

Who said this on  
Minnesota YEAR OF THE SCHOOL posters  
in 1984?

(DON'T CHEAT! TRY FIRST. Answers on page 25)

- A. "School was my passport from poverty."
- B. "She opened up the world to me."
- C. "I was too stupid to benefit from school."
- D. "It is a blessing to feel worthy when you're young and so shy."
- E. "My education is what is going to carry me through life."

## **MinnSPRA: An unconventional retrospective 1984**

In our archives, now in yours, is a rather long set of ideas generated for the Minnesota Year of the School, which began in the summer of 1984. (See pages 4-25). MinnSPRA and its members were heavily involved in planning and implementing this magnificent idea.

The 1984 ideas are on the following pages, reprinted exactly as received by then-Minnesota School personnel. They are a gift to you... and a challenge... to use as a foundation for building your own ongoing "Year of the School". (Once you build your own plan, please share with us!)

The title page of this document is no accident - borrowed from literature and film titles of the past: Many have seen Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the popular 1968 film. Children loved Adventures in Wonderland and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* when Lewis Carroll wrote them in the early 1860s.

George Orwell's book, *1984*, was published in 1949 when I was 9 years old. "Back then", it was hard to even imagine 1984. Even in 1960, when MinnSPRA was founded, 1984 was still a quarter century away. (The number, 1984, which appears in this document, as well as the page numbers, were typed, thanks to my teacher-daughter Joni Hagebock, on a vintage 1960-era Royal manual typewriter, once used by typing students at Anoka High School. In 1960, electric typewriters were not yet common. Today, even electric typewriters are becoming antiques!)

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Dick Bernard, MinnSPRA president  
March 23, 2001

## About the Minnesota School Public Relations Association (MinnSPRA)

We're primarily school PR professionals in Minnesota, but also include a very healthy mix of Community Education, Superintendents, School Board members, School Support Personnel, Professors, Private Consultants, and others...even a few retirees. Most of our members live in the seven county Twin Cities area, but over a fourth live in greater Minnesota. Most are women, but over a fourth are men. We share a passion for positive school public relations.

We began February 9, 1960, at a small meeting in St. Paul, and we have been leaders in school public relations in Minnesota ever since. For most of these years, we have been affiliated with the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), and every year since 1978 we have received NSPRA's Blue Ribbon Award in recognition of excellence. This year will be the third time (the previous two were 1967 and 1982) that we have hosted NSPRA's annual Summer Seminar. Do plan to attend "Wildly Fun in '01" ([www.nspr.org](http://www.nspr.org) or [www.minnspra.org](http://www.minnspra.org) for details).

We possess the usual attributes of an organization: members, dues, a board, meetings, conferences and workshops, a newsletter, awards....

But we are unusual, too: our chapter has a history of exceptionally strong member involvement and achievement including, most recently, our very highly regarded school marketing program "Selling the Invisible", based on the book of the same name by Harry Beckwith.

MinnSPRA possesses the hallmark qualities of an organization which not only survives, but thrives through generations of change: we are inclusive, and not dependent on a single person or group for leadership, program or continuity. We have been willing to change with the times.

If you are currently a member of MinnSPRA, Thank You. To all our active members through all the years, a special thanks. For those active in 2000-2001, extra special thanks.

If you aren't a member, give us a look - [www.minnspra.org](http://www.minnspra.org).

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**MinnSPRA's 2000-01 Board:** Dick Bernard, Woodbury, president;  
Barbara Nicol, Barbara Nicol Public Relations, Minneapolis, president-elect;  
Nancy Kracke, Chaska, past-president; Joan O'Fallon, Forest Lake, Secretary;  
Karen George, Anoka-Hennepin, Treasurer;  
Shirley Nygaard, Brooklyn Center, Membership;  
Barbara Brown, Prior Lake-Savage, director;  
Sylvia Burgos-Toftness, Stillwater, director; Eileen Harvala, Hopkins, director;  
Susan Brott, White Bear Lake, director; Don Kramlinger, Hastings, director;  
Barbara Olson, Mound-Westonka, director; Linda Swanson, Lakeville, director;  
Bob Noyed, Brooklyn Center, Communications Resources for Schools, NSPRA VP.  
**Joining the Board in 2001-2002:** Cheri Reese, Minneapolis, president-elect;  
Mary Elrod, South Washington County, director;  
Beth Johnson, St. Louis Park, director; Jackie Colby, Shakopee, director.

## Meet The Presidents of MinnSPRA

- 1960-62 Dick Nielsen, St. Paul  
1962-64 Dora Mary Macdonald, Duluth  
1964-65 O.H. Anderson, Mahtomedi  
1965-67 Warren Johnson, Osseo/St. Cloud State  
1967-68 Dale Prosser, Hastings  
1968-69 Bruce Bauer, Osseo  
1969-71 Jim Lee, State Department of Education  
1971-72 Armi Nelson, Edina  
1972-73 Mary Lindskog, Robbinsdale  
1973-74 John Weins, Anoka-Hennepin  
1974-75 Don Heintzman, Bloomington  
1975-76 Mike Torkelson, MSBA  
1976-77 Betty Townsend, Richfield  
1977-78 Norm Maguire, Little Falls  
1978-79 Nancy Kracke, St. Louis Park  
1979-80 John Urseth, Elk River  
1980-81 Donna Ford, Southwest ECSU  
1981-82 Judi Mollerus, ASPR, Minnetonka  
1982-83 Dawn McDowell, ASPR, Roseville<sup>1</sup>  
1983-84 Dr. Tom Fish, College of St. Thomas  
1984-85 Judy Fletcher, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale  
1985-86 Bridget Gothberg, Buffalo  
1986-87 Bob Krocak, Hennepin Technical Colleges  
1987-88 Stan Peichel, Anoka-Hennepin  
1988-89 Ann Voels, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan  
1989-90 Don Kramlinger, Hastings<sup>2</sup>  
1990-91 Mary Powell, Wayzata  
1991-92 Addie Mattson, Bloomington  
1992-93 Sonia Bjorgen, Mounds View  
1993-94 Sherrill Sparks, West St. Paul  
1994-95 Gretchen Tiberghien, St. Cloud State University  
1995-96 Judy Schell, Eden Prairie  
1996-97 Gary Kubat, Burnsville  
1997-98 Bob Noyed, Robbinsdale  
1998-99 Mary Olson, Anoka-Hennepin  
1999-2000 Nancy Kracke, Chaska  
2000-2001 Dick Bernard, Retired, Education Minnesota  
2001-2002 Barbara Nicol, Barbara Nicol Public Relations, Minneapolis  
2002-2003 Cheri Reese, Minneapolis

<sup>1</sup> President of National School Public Relations Association, 1987-88

<sup>2</sup> Don also is a past president of Minnesota and National Community Education Associations, and is a current MinnSPRA Board member.



# Minnesota Coalition For Public Education

1910 West County Road B, Roseville, Minnesota 55113

Minnesota Association of  
School Administrators

August 3, 1984

Minnesota Association of  
Secondary School  
Principals

Minnesota Chapter of the  
National School Public  
Relations Association

Minnesota Community  
Education Association

Minnesota Department  
of ~~Education~~

Minnesota Education  
Association

Minnesota Elementary  
School Principals  
Association

Minnesota Federation  
of Teachers

Minnesota Parent-  
Teacher-Student  
Association

Minnesota School  
Boards Association

Retired Educators  
Association of  
Minnesota

Dear Educator:

Governor Perpich has declared 1984-85 to be "The Year of the School." Using the campaign theme "Ah - Those Marvellous Minnesota Schools," each school and school district now has a year-long opportunity to focus attention on the positive things happening in our schools.

You'll find this packet full of ideas and activities designed to help you make the most of "The Year of the School." Whether this year becomes school-focused in your community depends largely on your creativity and enthusiasm.

The Minnesota Coalition for Public Education will be running periodic ads all year long designed to remind citizens that our schools are turning out good "products." In addition to these ads, we've suggested monthly themes designed to call attention to specific components of your school district. We hope you'll use these themes and one or two of the suggested activities to recognize the talents and contributions of teachers, students, parents, community leaders, businesses, and others who support education.

We have so much to be proud of in Minnesota Schools. Show off! Crow! Tell your neighborhood, your community and the entire state just how good things really are in your classrooms. Use the enthusiasm you build as a base of support for new ideas. The challenges we face are more easily solved when we're backed by our communities.

Backing comes in a variety of ways. The Coalition would like to express its gratitude to Campbell-Mithun, Inc., the Minneapolis advertising agency which so generously donated time to develop the "Year of the School" theme and the accompanying graphics.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact any of the Coalition representatives, myself or Dawn McDowell, Coalition Chairperson, (612) 925-4300.

Enjoy this "Year of the School." Make it yours. Make it special.

Warm regards,

Nancy Kracke, Chairperson  
Year of the School 1984-85



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Minnesota Community Education Association

Minnesota Department of Education

Minnesota Education Association

Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association

Minnesota Federation of Teachers

Minnesota Parent-Teacher-Student Association

Minnesota School Boards Association

Retired Educators Association of Minnesota

Minnesota School Food Service Association

Minnesota Administrators of Special Education

March, 1985

Dear Friend:

The Year of the School campaign has been a great success and the credit belongs to you. Our clipping service is being kept busy cutting articles out of newspapers all over the state highlighting programs, projects, events...all mentioning the Year of the School in Minnesota...all focusing on the positive things happening in our public schools.

We are proud to send to you the second in a series of five ads that we hope you will use during your local Year of the School campaign. This one features Governor Rudy Perpich. When you read the copy I think you'll agree that the ad is a powerful testimony to the impact of education in the life of a child.

You'll be happy to know that the Linda Kelsey ad ran in more than 60 newspapers throughout the state. We're hoping for even broader coverage for this one.

In a few weeks we'll be sending additional ads featuring famous Minnesotans. Included in our series are Eric Severied, Garrison Keillor, and Dave Winfield. I want to again acknowledge the efforts of Campbell-Mithun, Inc. in preparing this outstanding campaign. Their help and enthusiasm has been wonderful.

The Year of the School is far from over. The year 1985 offers wonderful opportunities to celebrate public education. Look for an announcement later this year about a Year of the School event scheduled for autumn, 1985. It will be a chance for all of us to get together again as we did in August to conclude our celebration with the same sense of togetherness we experienced when we began.

Thank you once again for your energy and support. You are one of the most marvelous parts of "those marvelous Minnesota Schools."

Warm Regards,

*Nancy Kracke*

Nancy Kracke, Chairperson  
Year of the School Campaign

NK:mr

**Ah,**  
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Minnesota schools!

## Working with the News Media

The "Year of the School" has a lot of shine, but it can't sparkle without the cooperation of the TV, radio, and newspapers in your community.

Our goal is to build support for education, particularly from those who do not have children in school. Research tells us that the best source of information about schools is the news media. Here are some suggestions for working with the media this year:

- o Send the sample news release to your local media now. An announcement now sets the stage for the year.
- o Ask to sit down with reporters individually to review the "Year of the School" campaign. Alert them to the monthly themes. Ask them to consider developing features around them, and suggest topics from your schools.
- o Plan "Year of the School" events far enough in advance to give the media notice. Don't expect coverage on the spur of the moment.
- o Ask your local radio and TV stations to devote some public service time to students and schools. Get students involved in taping some PSAs.
- o Maintain regular contact all year long with the media. Keep their interest going by feeding them information and ideas.
- o Invite a representative of the local media to serve on a "Year of the School Task Force."
- o Look for opportunities to get staff members on radio and television talk shows. It gives staff the recognition they need while getting important information into the community.
- o Ask the paper to allow students to produce a page of the paper once or twice during the year in order to report on "Year of the School" activities from their point of view.
- o Send thank you notes to editors, publishers, station managers, reporters, etc., for good coverage. Like educators, the news media is not on the receiving end of too many compliments. It means a lot to have the good we do recognized. Consider sending both personal notes and letters to be run on the editorial page.
- o Don't forget to let the Minnesota Department of Education know about the ways you're celebrating "Year of the School." By sharing in Education Update, you'll be sharing with all of us. Also consider submitting your news to the newsletter of your professional organizations.



## September

### Parents as Partners

- o Involve parents in planning your annual Open House.
- o Hold a coffee party for new parents.
- o Allow parents to take mini-courses with their children.
- o Invite realtors to take a tour of your schools.
- o Invite Chamber of Commerce officials to have coffee with the principal. Ask students to tell them what they are learning in school.
- o Declare an emergency (first aid) awareness day and invite parents and children to participate.
- o Invite parents to take part in field trips sponsored by school.
- o Organize a "Happiness is Grandparents" or "Foster-grandparents" day.
- o Invite Grandmas and Grandpas to share school lunch.
- o Host a "Doughnuts for Dads" Day.
- o Guest of the day--invite business leaders to school lunch.
- o Invite secondary parents to come to school and follow their child's curriculum for part of the day.
- o Invite each parent to participate in small group meetings with the principal/staff.
- o Invite parents to hear an impromptu band concert put on by junior high students.
- o Invite parents to the gym for a gymnastic exhibition.
- o Have an open door visitation policy in which parents are always welcome.

- o Hold small, informal neighborhood meetings on issues of current concern in homes of parents.
- o Make schools more welcome places with 'You Are Here' maps.
- o Send a postcard to parents each time student is counselled.
- o Develop a parent newsletter.
- o Invite parents to serve as key communicators so that parents and staff could receive feedback immediately.
- o Send a letter to parents of graduating seniors praising them for doing a good job.
- o Publish a bi-weekly community curriculum calendar to tell parents what their children are learning.
- o Organize a bus trip to inform parents about the schools in their community.
- o Try a recorded message service for the day. (Something about the school, future activities, etc.).
- o Invite parents to school for a chat with counselors and an interpretation of what test scores mean.
- o Set up welcome wagon for school use--retired teachers are ambassadors.
- o Send home a folder of school work with comments (short note) explaining what students have accomplished that week.
- o Make a "good news" call to each parent at least once a year.
- o Extend your "buddy system" to help new students feel more comfortable in school to parents--families helping families feel at home in new neighborhood.
- o Take classes into local shopping center or mall for demonstrations of craft activities.
- o Involve parents on a 'get acquainted' session with new immigrants.
- o Invite single parents to a coffee party with school personnel.
- o Host parenting meetings on topics such as discipline, drug abuse, and developmental issues.
- o Set aside a shelf of your school library for books on parenting.
- o Invite parents to the school picnic.

October

## Technology and Education

- o Develop certificates acknowledging different levels of student expertise and distribute as students master each level.
- o Hold a "Computer Night" in which the community can see the variety of ways computers are used in school.
- o Send out news releases about the kinds of training your staff is receiving on the topics of technology.
- o Distribute "I Speak Computer" buttons to students.
- o Highlight student achievement and talent with features in your district newsletters.
- o Ask businesses to send computer experts to talk to classes.
- o Set up field trips to businesses using computers.
- o Set up a computer class for adults in your school. Invite parents or other members of the community to become "computer literate."
- o Set a goal for your entire staff to become computer literate. Involve your cooks, custodians, secretaries, aides, etc.
- o Highlight the ways the District is using computers to help with administrative duties such as attendance, bus schedules, etc.
- o Reprint articles from Time, June 11, 1984, or Pioneer Press, June 10, 1984, concerning Minnesota's reputation as a "high technology state." Have those available to pass out at community meetings, along with articles from the local paper(s).
- o Don't limit the focus to computers. If you have classes featuring technology of other sorts, be sure to highlight those as well.
- o Hold a high-tech career day.

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## November

### "Let's Hear It For Students"

- o Ask each teacher to choose different children each day to be "kids of the day." Have them come to the principal's office to receive a handshake and a sticker.
- o Use the display case to acknowledge student achievement.
- o Host a student-leader recognition luncheon at the district office.
- o Begin each Board meeting with a recognition of student achievement.
- o Dust off those happy-grams. Really use them generously.
- o Call each home to say something nice about each student.
- o Sponsor a Student of the Week program.
- o Raffle lunch with the principal at McDonalds. Children could earn good conduct tokens from teachers in order to enter.
- o Take polaroid shots of new students. Put the picture on a bulletin board in the hall and ask everyone to welcome the student.
- o Use outdoor signs to highlight student achievement.
- o Write to parents telling them of a good deed their child did.
- o Ask the paper to feature a student a week.
- o Pass out buttons saying "I'm a great kid."
- o Ask students for ideas on how to improve school.

## December

### Lifelong Learning: Learning is for Everyone

- o Plan K-12 curriculum to stress process of, and motivation for lifelong learning.
- o Invite community members into the classroom to discuss the nature of learning they use in their businesses or professions. Ask them to point out the importance of continued learning.
- o Encourage teachers, administrators and school staff to participate in their own continuing education.
- o Offer training workshops for school personnel appropriate to their areas of specialization.
- o Develop a program in which parents can learn how to assist their children in homework and the development of good study habits.
- o Recognize academic accomplishment of students to the same or greater degree as athletic achievement is recognized. Use district and local media to provide this recognition.
- o Devise tutoring programs: adult-to-student and student-to-student.
- o Reverse student-teacher roles. Allow students to teach and have teachers participate as peers in classroom discussions.
- o Devote attention in physical education classes to the learning of lifetime sports.
- o Stress that learning abilities remain stable or increase throughout the life cycle.
- o Have a knowledge show-and-tell evening (prepared by teachers and students) to show adults in the community the vast expansion of knowledge that has occurred in a short time.
- o Develop intergenerational programs in which senior citizens and young people can interact, share ideas and learn from each other.

- o Let parents and community members know how much more students need to learn in 1984 than they had to know in 1960.
- o Invite adults to sit in on and participate in regular high school classes.
- o Teach children (and adults) about libraries and how to use them. Provide many opportunities for children to become familiar with the public libraries.
- o Organize book and discussion clubs for adults, adults and children together, and children alone.
- o Stress the job of reading through modeling and reward systems.
- o Cooperate with the library in offering noontime book discussions: "brown bags and books."
- o Encourage businesses to provide small rewards and recognition to students for academic achievement.
- o Arrange for students to sit in on post-secondary vocational education and college/university classes to acquaint them with the process of higher education.
- o Organize latch key programs and assure opportunities for real learning for those who participate.
- o Offer opportunities through Community Education for children to extend and expand learning beyond K-12 class work.
- o Offer a variety of early childhood education programs: parent and child learning together, parent education and pre-school.
- o Provide a toy and learning materials lending library for parents of young children.
- o Determine the learning needs of community members and offer classes and activities based on these needs through Community Education.
- o Encourage all community members to participate in a variety of Community Education classes.
- o Use school facilities to offer college-level courses for adults.
- o Have parents and children learn together through Community Education offerings: classes, workshops and discussion groups.
- o Offer Adult Basic Education, General Education Development (GED) and Adult Diploma programs. Devote efforts to motivating participation.

- o Offer reading classes for non-reading adults. Offer classes to upgrade reading skills for all adults.
- o Determine the role that the school (through Community Education) can play in responding to continuing education needs of professions and businesses.
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## January

# Teachers Make It Happen

- o Ask a business to establish scholarship funds for students interested in teaching as a career.
- o Establish an Idea Bank in which teachers share successful teaching activity ideas with others through districtwide clearing house.
- o Set up a Dial-a-Tutor phone bank to help students with homework.
- o Ask the PTSA to purchase a "Thank You Teacher" ad in the local newspaper.
- o Develop a regular in-service program.
- o Promote a teacher recognition program in your community. Have a "Teacher of the Month" or week.
- o Acknowledge service anniversaries with a lapel pin, plaque or letter from the Board Chairperson.
- o Develop a Business-Education Exchange - In the summer, a teacher "interns" at a local business; during the school year a local business representative "interns" at school.
- o Establish a teacher speakers bureau available to community organizations or groups.
- o When a student earns special board or community recognition ask the student to name a teacher who helped along the way.
- o Sponsor "Drop a note to your favorite teacher - past or present" district provide addresses, etc.
- o Sponsor a community scholarship for teachers.
- o Increase use of PR to underscore role of teachers.
- o Introduce teachers to parents through a feature on each one sometime during the year in the school newsletter.





- o Develop a teacher recognition day in the community.
- o Turn some staff meetings over to teachers to organize and conduct.
- o During American Education Week ask business to give a discount to teachers.

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## February

### Business Partnerships

- o Trade "advertising" and/or bumper stickers with businesses which have trucks and cars. The companies' vehicles could say something like, "We support Minnesota schools," and the reciprocal school vehicles and buses could say something like, "We thank Acme Printing for its support." Chamber of Commerce members, school staff and students may like to participate using their own vehicles.
- o Sponsor reciprocal open houses between schools and businesses. School personnel may stop in after school at a particular business and have coffee and a tour; business employees could stop in the school buildings before or after work.
- o "Auction" teachers/staff and business people. Businesses could agree to "buy" a teacher to give, for example, a seminar for employees on better writing or to lead a field trip to the local bog or river valley. The school district could "buy" a business person to act as a consultant on how to sell a bond issue or make a clerical office pool run more efficiently.
- o Trade a few key people for a day. Have a local company president spend a day with the local superintendent, and vice versa. Ask reporters to attend each visit, and/or interview the president and superintendent afterwards to find out what each learned about the other.
- o Host a tea, ice cream social, or ceremony to honor teachers or other school personnel who have made a significant difference in business persons lives. Ask local business people to invite one individual from their school days to attend, and to submit a short summary of what they remember has made the difference for them in business, what made an excellent teacher, what has helped make them successful.
- o Hold a concert featuring school students and employees of local businesses who have musical talent. Choral groups, bands, and orchestras could participate, holding rehearsals in a business facility at one time and a school facility at another. A dramatic production, a debate, or a local "talent bowl" in which teams of students, faculty, and business people are mixed, are other ways to point out the similarities, common interests and goals between the business world and public schools.

- o Ask businesses to allow high school juniors and seniors to come in and "run" their company for a day.
- o February is not too early to have teachers and district staff thinking about summer internships with businesses. Sponsor coffee klatches/working sessions with businesses and interested school staff to discover possibilities for summer employment or internships.
- o Schedule a panel of business people who do hiring, graduating seniors, successful graduates of the local school system, and guidance counselors or others who help plan coursework. The panel can discuss questions or be asked questions on what the business community expects students to know when they graduate in order to be hired, how can the schools help prepare students to meet those expectations, how is business willing to work with the school district to accomplish that goal, and vice versa.
- o Ask local companies to sponsor company tours for students and teachers, perhaps on a Saturday, and to have professionals available who can answer questions and inform students about expectations in job performance, attendance, and educational background.
- o Have school boards recognize members of business advisory committees at February meetings, and consider presenting plaques or certificates.
- o Arrange for science and math teachers to go to businesses which feature scientific occupations or inservicing in technology and other current market issues.
- o Sponsor teacher and business panels on important issues to educate the community, such as an environmental issue affecting both business and private individuals.
- o Take one day to meet with business people and begin planning and brainstorming for partnerships.
- o Sponsor activities as a "prescription" for cabin fever. For example, physical education classes, business sponsored teams, and individuals could attend an indoor olympics with unusual events. (Academics, special education, lifelong learning and community education programs.)
- o Ask businesses which have newsletters or trade publications to print school district news and information.
- o Ask writing teachers to involve business people in setting up and judging writing contests, perhaps about aspects of business.
- o Work with the local paper to start a weekly school page, which would be written by school students and staff. Consider working with the paper to sponsor the page each week instead of producing an in-house newsletter, saving the district money while reaching community residents who do not have children in school but still support the schools through taxes. Ask the local paper to set up a schedule of weekly themes on which students can write their opinions.

- o Ask businesses to sponsor software contests. Students design their own programs, and the best could receive prizes of software.
- o Let students work cash registers or gasoline pumps at local businesses to encourage them to think about why they have to learn math. These would be great "photo opportunities" for local media.
- o Ask industrial nurses, farmers, doctors, and county extension agents to discuss health and safety in the work place jointly with students, school staff, and business people.
- o Emphasize wellness through a Saturday wellness day at the local school. Teachers and business people could offer seminars or labs in music, poetry, art, drama and other creative outlets, emphasizing emotional wellness. Other seminars could be offered in physical conditioning, stress management, and leisure pursuits. Lifelong learning classes could offer seminars on how children react under stress and offer parenting tips, as well as wellness for the older Minnesotans.
- o Ask businesses to sponsor awards for high attendance rates, emphasizing it is just as important to be in school as it is to be on the job, that students cannot learn if they are not in school.
- o Organize an "adopt a student" program, in which business people would work one-on-one with students who have attendance problems.
- o Organize a community forum for business people who used to be educators and educators who used to be business people to talk about their perspectives on each profession.
- o Sponsor seminars, with the help of business people, on unionization and minimum wage laws to increase student understanding.

Remember: You are not limited to one district or town. Collaborate with your neighbors!

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## March

# Education as an Investment

There are a number of ways for each school district to show that the investment of its community in education has paid off. Use as much creativity as you can to bring that message home.

The best way is to demonstrate the pay off of investing in education is by featuring your district's outstanding graduates. That's why we're suggesting that every school system in the state use the month of March to highlight alumni.

Not every school district can claim a movie star or senator or governor or supreme court justice. But every district has examples of graduates who have gone on to make their mark in the world.

These alumni are one of your most positive ways to illustrate the importance of investment in education. And the beauty is that they will make the point for you by just being who they are and saying some positive things about your school system.

Here are some suggestions for finding those grads and gaining their cooperation:

- o Ask teachers and administrators, current and retired, to give you a list of graduates they know who would be good features for you.

Don't limit their thinking to world-famous celebrities. The local doctor, the area farmer, the minister or the mayor are just as successful on their own turf. Success shouldn't be defined in terms of Hollywood and New York.

- o When you have your list together, write each grad, explaining your need and ask for an opportunity to call each one for an interview. Explain that the activity is part of a statewide Year of the School promotion.
- o Use the material to write feature articles for your newsletter. Ask the local paper to interview a few grads, too.

- o If you find that a number of grads have stayed in your area, host a get together of alumni. Ask them to be available to media and students to talk about their education and the pay off they experienced as they grew up. Perhaps they can cite specific lessons or teaching methods which had a strong impact.

**April**

**Reaching Out To Your Community**

- o Set a goal of hosting one non-parent visitor per pupil. Have visitors sign a guest book.
- o Make a mailing list of non-parents living near your school. Have students write personal invitations to visit school and enclose a self-portrait so visitors will recognize them.
- o Begin a community involvement challenge. Challenge a well known person to come to school, and have him/her challenge someone else to come another time.
- o Invite local senior citizens to set up a bazaar during holidays for students to shop at and for the seniors to receive tours of the school, etc.
- o Send congratulatory notes along with an invitation to visit school to new parents in your area.
- o Contact business and civic organizations and suggest they tour your school in lieu of one of their monthly meetings.
- o Have students invite non-parents to have lunch with them.
- o Host a "Family Day" when all of the members of your school staff invite their families to attend school.
- o Ask a business or community group to "adopt your school".
- o Pair teachers and community leaders for a "Teacher for the Day" program.
- o Take the school to the community--have student groups perform in shopping centers, for employee dinners, at City Hall, etc.
- o Display student work in shopping centers, hospitals and other public buildings.
- o Invite local craftsmen/women to demonstrate their crafts throughout the year.

- o Honor a "good citizen of the week" with an invitation to lunch or a special program.
- o Plan a staff meeting around some "How to" speaker--preparing tax returns, estate planning, family budgeting, and invite non-parents and parents to join.
- o Use non-parents as judges for student contests.
- o Ask senior citizens/non-parents to show travel slides to a class.
- o Hold a 1930's or 1940's dance and invite non-parents.
- o Contact real estate offices in your area and invite them to tour your school and hold their staff meeting there.
- o Ask businessmen/women to serve as mentors to secondary students.
- o Invite district office clerical staff to visit your school.
- o Add substitutes to mailing list of school newsletter.
- o Hold a "What I like best about School" contest and post the papers/pictures in visible areas of your school.
- o Provide neat permanent name tags for every employee...helps visitors, substitutes and new students.
- o Have students make "Welcome to our School" posters to display at all entrances.
- o Place posters inviting people to visit the schools in business windows, public windows and other meeting places.
- o Invite senior citizens to play in the school band or orchestra.
- o Have each school develop their own school's list of local resources which focuses on talents of retired people, local businesses open for tours and representatives of industry or government who live in the area and could lecture to classes, etc.
- o Consider opening secondary classes without full enrollment on a non-tuition basis to senior citizens or interested adults.
- o Identify key communicators--those people most trusted in the neighborhood or area--and plan to provide them with regular information about your school program on a regular basis.
- o Provide a speakers' bureau listing and send it to club and association program directors.



- o Consider holding an alumni celebration in connection with an open house if the school is to have a major anniversary this year.
- o Once a year, sponsor a day of mini-courses staffed with lay people who have expertise in subjects such as publishing, television, gardening, astrology, etc.
- o Offer good examples of student art-sculpture, drawings, paintings, etc., for display in businesses, offices, hospitals, etc. Include a photograph of the student artist.
- o Give complimentary passes to senior citizens for all school events.
- o Include non-parent citizens on school advisory councils, PTA members, task forces, and committees.
- o Set up an "adopt a student" plan for non-parents either in tutoring, counseling or just companionship situation.
- o Include school neighbors on mailing tests for school newsletters or have students deliver copies of their neighbors.
- o Recognize the value of community education activities in your schools.

A. Governor Rudy Perpich

E. Dave Winfield

Who are today's heroes in our state, in your community?  
These are the people who can be your best spokesperson

**May**

**Creativity: Alive in Public Schools**

- o Ask students to write their impressions of the school year. Share these with local media.
- o Establish a Wall of Fame - Recognizing student conduct, achievement, attendance or creative accomplishments.
- o "Problem of the Week" - Develop a problem solving question each week - the difficulty geared to grade level. First five solvers get name on Wall of Fame. Students appear to have weakness in problem-solving. Being in a game setting could take pressure off making it so difficult.
- o Encourage participation in talent show.
- o Regularly use local shopping malls to showcase student art, writing, etc.
- o Ask permission to allow students to paint city walls, fences etc. as colorful murals.
- o Establish an AAA - Arts Academics Awards - A month long program in which children can enter a number of categories. Academics and arts awards are given to top 3 winners in each grade level. Host an evening show to award ribbons and ask winners in performing categories to perform.
- o Publish a book of poetry and creative writing collected from students during the year. Illustrations in the book are also done by students. Books can then be sold for a fund-raiser.
- o Host a Creative Arts Day in school. Invite the entire community. Schedule events going on in different places and at different times all over the school.
- o Have a Creative Arts Week for students. Use a portion of each day and let students select choice every day. Solicit parents and community members to teach various activities so the students can have a wide variety from which to choose.

- o Do you have a large dull empty wall in your school? Let students (under the direction of art specialist or parent volunteers) make the wall come alive with a large mural painted by the students.
- o Devote a portion of each school newsletter to students creative writing.
- o Participate in the state-wide creative writing contest sponsored by MESPA.
- o Don't forget science! Host displays at school or in local business highlighting student work. Bring creative science ideas from business to school, too.
- o Set aside special days for students to dress in unusual ways.
- o Sponsor a Student Essay contest. Topics might focus on:
  - "What I liked about school this year," or
  - "How my "teacher/principal" helped me learn this year."
- o Ask the school board to honor creative students at May Board meeting.
- o Get involved in the PTSA Fine Arts program. Seek publicity for local winners.
- o Ask students to assign "bumper stickers" for promoting your schools.
- o Remember the Visual Arts - photography, video, filmmaking. Ask local artists to work with students.
- o Host a Student-Teacher Creativity Fair - Let everyone participate.
- o Ask artisans to demonstrate their skills to students.
- o Plan a community creativity parade.
- o Ask students to design and build bird houses, model rockets, etc. Ask the media in to judge.

Answers to 1984 celebrity quotes (back of cover page)

- A. Governor Rudy Perpich
- B. Linda Kelsey
- C. Eric Sevareid
- D. Garrison Keillor
- E. Dave Winfield

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