

ND DPI Administration

[Kirsten Baesler](#)
State Superintendent

[Robert J. Christman](#)
Deputy Superintendent

[Bob Marthaller](#)
Assistant Superintendent

ND DPI Unit Directors

Academic Support
[Ann Ellefson](#)
(701) 328-2488

Assessment
[Greg Gallagher](#)
(701) 328-1838

Child Nutrition & Food Distribution
[Linda Schloer](#)
(701) 328-4645

Student Support & Innovation (FTP)
[Laurie Matzke](#)
(701) 328-2284

Fiscal Management
[Stephanie Gullickson](#)
(701) 328-2176

Human Resources
[Addy Schmaltz](#)
(701) 328-3298

Indian/Multicultural Education
[Lucy Fredericks](#)
(701) 328-1718

Management Information Systems
[Steve Snow](#)
(701) 328-2189

Safe & Healthy Schools and
Adult Education
[Valerie Fischer](#)
(701) 328-4138

School Finance and Organization
[Jerry Coleman](#)
(701) 328-4051

Special Education
[Gerry Teevens](#)
(701) 328-2692

Teacher & School Effectiveness
[Sherryl Houdek](#)
(701) 328-2755

Newsletter Co-Editors

[Peg Wagner](#)
(701) 328-3545

[Roxie Dietrich](#)
(701) 328-3231

Superintendent's Corner

As I write this I am reflecting on another concluded legislative session and another school year completed. Where does the time go?

As educators we have many important decisions to make, and sometimes we don't have the time or resources to deliberate them as long as we would like. The legislature acts in swift fashion and the months of a school year pass quickly. But it is important that at the conclusion of events we reflect and assess just

exactly how well we did, what we can do better next time, but most importantly what motivated us to do what we did. The story of the Maasai tribe helps us at DPI do that.

I first learned of the Maasai through a speech given by the Rev. Dr. Patrick T. O'Neill. His speech was titled "How Are the Children?"

Among the most accomplished and fabled tribes of Africa, no tribe was considered to have warriors more fearsome or more intelligent than the mighty Maasai. It is perhaps surprising, then, to learn the traditional greeting passed between Maasai warriors was "And how are the children?" It is still the traditional greeting among the Maasai today, because it acknowledges the high value that the Maasai always place on their children's well-being. Even warriors with no children of their own would always give the traditional answer, "All the children are well." Meaning, of course, that peace and safety prevail, that the priorities of protecting the young, the powerless, are in place. That Maasai society has not forgotten its reason for being, its proper functions and responsibilities. "All the children are well" means that life is good. It means that the daily struggles for existence do not preclude proper caring for their young.

I wonder how it might affect our own children's welfare if in our culture, in our State, if we took to greeting each other with this daily question: "And how are the children?" If every adult among us, parent and non-parent alike, felt an equal weight for the daily care and protection of all the children in our community, in our town, in our state, in our country. . . . Could we truly say without any hesitation, "The children are well, yes, all the children are well." ?

Superintendent's Corner, continued

Hanging in my office is an original warrior shield from the Maasai tribe. It was given to me shortly after I was sworn into office as the state superintendent. Many issues are discussed, meetings held and problems addressed in my office. The shield is a visual reminder to all of us that our decisions must be based on the question, "How are the Children?" Can we say, "All the children are well in North Dakota?"

As you reflect on your school year and begin to plan for 2015-2016 I urge everyone to think about using this as your guiding question. I share the Maasai message with the many legislators and other leaders who visit my office. I encourage them to ask that question and pass it along to others.

I am convinced that if we do, it **will** make a difference in the reality of how children are thought about and cared for.

Until Next Time

Kirsten Baesler

Kirsten Baesler



Contact Information

Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent
kbaesler@nd.gov
(701) 328-4570

Lynette Norbeck
Executive Assistant to the State Superintendent
lnorbeck@nd.gov
(701) 328-4572