



# ConnectED

A Quarterly Publication of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

**Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent**

**Robert J. Christman, Deputy Superintendent**

[www.dpi.state.nd.us](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us)

## Inside this issue:

ESEA Flexibility Waiver Status	2
School Accreditation	2
High School Graduation Rates	2
Superintendent's Corner	3
Adult Education GED Programs	4
Safe & Healthy Schools Backpack Program	4
IEP Team Member	4
Early Childhood State Grants Still Available!	5
Early Childhood Legislation	5
Uniting for Early Childhood	5
School Year 2013-2014 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Application	6
Title I Schools List Published	6
Research Corner	7
Mark Your Calendar!	8
Questions and Answers	9

## Volume 1, Issue 1

January-February-March 2013

### Mission

*The NDDPI will partner with schools and communities to provide a statewide system of excellent service and support to ensure a healthy school environment that fosters student success.*

## Educational Summit

On Thursday, January 10, 2013, the Missouri River Educational Cooperative hosted an educational summit sponsored by the North Dakota Regional Education Association (REAs). The purpose of the summit was to build a strong working relationship between the NDDPI, REAs, and other educational entities so that we are all working collaboratively on the challenges and opportunities that face North Dakota students, teachers, and schools.

The agenda for the summit included the following topics:

**ESEA Flexibility Waiver**  
NDDPI staff provided a status report on the ESEA Flexibility Waiver application.

### **Common Core**

Discussion was held regarding how the department plans to provide professional development and technical assistance regarding the Common Core. The NDDPI is requesting funds through the state legislature to provide training on the Common Core.

### **Succeed 2020**

REAs provided updated information on the status of the Succeed 2020 grants.

### **School Accreditation**

Superintendent Baesler provided updated information on the NDDPI's plans for school accreditation. The department is requesting state funding through the North

Dakota legislature to pay for AdvancEd/NCA for all North Dakota schools so that schools and districts can be statewide accredited. For the school improvement portion of accreditation, schools will be able to select from the online tools offered through AdvancEd or NDMILE.

In addition to the planned agenda items, other topics such as school safety were also discussed. The event was a great opportunity for North Dakota educators to gather and engage in collaborative discussions on how we can all work together on these and other key education issues.

## 2011-2012 School District Profile Notification

The department would like to inform you of the recent release of the [2011-2012 School District Profiles](#) (also known as the School District Report Cards).

Information includes statewide school plant performance data and statewide district performance data, as well as information on the district's assessment, demographics, and the statewide district performance

summary. The department released the 2011-2012 information in September 2012.

This serves as a prime opportunity to remind school districts that they are required to inform parents that this information is available to them. [Sample letters](#) regarding this requirement are available. Most districts choose to inform parents of the

availability of this information through their school newsletter. Remember, in addition to providing a website address for the document, districts must also inform parents as to how they can review a hard copy made available by the district (e.g., copy in school office, library, etc.).

**Department Staff****Administration**

Kirsten Baesler  
State Superintendent

Robert J. Christman  
Deputy Superintendent

Bob Marthaller  
Assistant Superintendent

**Unit Directors**

Jerry Coleman  
School Finance and Organization

Valerie Fischer  
Safe and Healthy Schools/Adult  
Education and GED Services

Lucy Fredericks  
Indian Education

Greg Gallagher  
Standards and Achievement

Laurie Matzke  
Title I

Bonnie Miller  
Administrative Services

Linda Schloer  
Child Nutrition and Food  
Distribution

Steve Snow  
Management Information  
Systems

Matt Strinden  
Teacher & School Effectiveness

Gerry Teevens  
Special Education

**Newsletter Editor**

Lauri Nord

**ESEA Flexibility Waiver Status**

On Thursday, December 27, 2012, the NDDPI resubmitted its ESEA Flexibility Waiver application addressing the requested items outlined by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The revised [ESEA Flexibility Waiver application](#) and other key waiver documents can be accessed on the department's website.

In the resubmitted application, North Dakota made all of the changes requested by the USDE, with the exception of one issue. North Dakota's original application proposed reducing the number of non-proficient students by 25% over a six-year period. The USDE felt that percentage was not rigorous enough and requested that we raise it to 50%.

The NDDPI and the ESEA Planning Committee continue to believe that our original proposed method of reducing the number of non-proficient students by 25% within a six-year timeline is educationally sound, yet is reasonable and achievable, especially for our priority and focus schools. Therefore, the NDDPI provided additional justification for resubmitting our original request to reduce the number of non-proficient students by 25% within a six-year timeframe rather than revise the 25% gain to a 50% gain.

The NDDPI has participated in several conference calls with USDE staff to discuss our resubmitted ESEA Flexibility Waiver application. There continues to be two key issues that need to be addressed:

- North Dakota's proposed method of reducing the number of non-proficient students over a six-year time span – We are still negotiating with USDE staff on a method that will be acceptable to both North Dakota educators and the USDE.
- Accountability of subgroups under the ESEA Flexibility Waiver – The USDE is asking for greater accountability of the four subgroups in our ESEA Flexibility Waiver proposal.

On February 11, 2013, Superintendent Baesler announced that the state's flexibility waiver application will be reviewed by U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, and the Executive Committee without North Dakota making any further revisions.

We will continue to keep North Dakota school personnel updated on the status of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver request.

**School Accreditation**

The NDDPI is requesting state funding through the North Dakota Legislature to pay for AdvancEd/NCA for all North Dakota schools so that schools and districts can be statewide accredited. Using AdvancEd/NCA for accreditation will allow for equity and uniformity across the state and hold all schools seeking accreditation to the same state standard. This system would also allow reporting and technical assistance to be streamlined across the state. Funding for statewide accreditation is currently being requested in HB 1013, which is the NDDPI's primary bill to provide an appropriation to the department.

For the school improvement portion of accreditation, schools will be able to select from the online improvement tools offered through AdvancEd or NDMILE.

**High School Graduation Rates**

A new report from the U.S. Department of Education shows that high school graduation rates are at their highest level since 1974. According to the report, during the 2009-2010 school year, 78.2 percent of high school students nationwide graduated on time, which is a substantial increase from the 73.4 percent recorded in 2005-2006.

North Dakota's statewide graduation rate for the 2009-2010 school year was at 86.2 percent which is much higher than the national rate.

## Superintendent's Corner



Thank you to Laurie Matzke and Lauri Nord for putting together the first issue (Volume 1, Issue 1) of a newsletter from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. For all of us involved in the education of our children, it is the hope of the NDDPI that this method of communication will help each of us be better informed about what is happening in the world of learning in North Dakota. In any organization, I feel it is important to communicate what is going on, not only within the department, but also with those who are running programs and teaching in our schools and classrooms throughout the state. We welcome practitioners to share their experiences, challenges, and successes so that together we can learn how to best meet the needs of all North Dakota students.

Let me share a little of what has been going on in my life since I took the oath of office on January 8, 2013. First, I have to tell you that

January flew by faster than anyone could imagine. The legislative session brings with it an increased workload for many of us; this is a major responsibility of the department. I have been so impressed with the enormous effort put forth by department staff members and North Dakota educators who are involved with the session. I have witnessed the contributions from our staff and members of the field in numerous hearings relating to education. These efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Thanks to all educators who devote so much time and effort to the legislative process with such passion and professionalism.

Meanwhile, the work of the NDDPI continues for those who are not deeply involved with the session. I recognize and **appreciate** those efforts, too. Thank you for your continued good work.

I am very appreciative to be working with you and leading the public education efforts for children of our state. Thus far, my time as state superintendent has been somewhat of a whirlwind with legislative hearings, meetings with legislators, and large audiences that have deep interests in the education of our young people. Please know that my passion for our students to receive the best possible education, and to make certain that they graduate from high school in North Dakota career or college ready, motivates me each and every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kirsten Baesler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirsten Baesler

## Contact Information

Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent  
[kbaesler@nd.gov](mailto:kbaesler@nd.gov)  
(701) 328-4570

Lynette Norbeck, Superintendent's Office  
[lnorbeck@nd.gov](mailto:lnorbeck@nd.gov)  
(701) 328-4572

## Adult Education GED Programs

GED Testing Service® has announced a new GED® series as of January 2, 2014.

The new GED® will be aligned to the common core standards and offered only via computer. Any student who has not taken and passed all five current exams by December 31, 2013, will have to retake all five tests. If you know of any individual who has not yet

completed all five exams, please encourage them to contact their local Adult Learning Center or GED® test site to prepare for and take all exams.

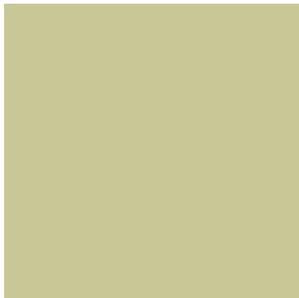
All Adult Learning Centers have been provided computers through a Workforce Investment Act grant for instruction, keyboarding, and computer literacy in preparation of the new GED® series. In addition, computer

classes have helped enhance instruction and prepare students for online job applications, online college courses, and increased proficiency for employment goals.

## Safe & Healthy Schools Backpack Program

The Safe & Healthy Schools unit implements a Coordinated School Health (CSH) program in collaboration with the North Dakota Department of Health. The CSH team initiated a backpack project to increase weekend physical activity time and parent/child connectiveness by providing activities, materials, and healthy living suggestions to improve family fitness.

Backpacks and materials were provided to selected fourth grade classrooms for weekend checkout and included stacking cups, Chinese jump ropes, luna sticks, frisbees, and/or a child friendly cookbook. According to family evaluations, increased physical activity and family time were both noted.



## IEP Team Member

A number of questions have been brought to the attention of the state Special Education office regarding who qualifies as a parent on the IEP team.

The IDEA Sec. 300.30(a) defines a “parent” as:

1. A biological or adoptive parent;
2. A foster parent, unless state law, regulations, or contractual obligations with a state or local entity prohibit a foster parent from acting as a parent;
3. A guardian generally authorized to act as the child’s parent, or authorized to make educational decisions for the child (but not the state if the child is a ward of the state);
4. An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, step parent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare; or
5. A surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with Sec. 300.519 pr Sec. 639 (a)(5) of the Act.

The IEP process serves as a communication vehicle between parents and school personnel. It enables parents, *as equal participants*, to make joint, informed decisions regarding:

- The child’s needs and appropriate goals;
- The extent to which the child will be involved in the general curriculum and participate in the general education environment and in statewide and district wide assessments; and
- The services needed to support that involvement and participation and to achieve agreed-upon goals.

For additional questions or clarification, please contact the state Special Education office at (701) 328-2277.

## A Focus on Early Childhood Education

### Educating Our Children When They Are Most Ready To Learn

#### Early Childhood State Grants Still Available!

State grant funds are still available for the Early Childhood Continuing Education Grant and the Early Childhood Education Environment Grant. Under SB 2013, the 62nd Legislative Assembly passed two state grants for early childhood educators and public school districts in North Dakota. The grant funds are available until **June 30, 2013**. If you are interested in either grant, please contact [Tara Bitz](#) at (701) 328-4646.

##### Continuing Education Grant

Under provisions of SB 2013, section 11, passed by the 62nd Legislative Assembly, North Dakota residents may receive a \$1,200 grant. To qualify for the grant award, the eligible recipient must complete the application for an Early Childhood Continuing Education Grant (SFN 60015) and:

- a. Be a preschool teacher or teacher assistant for whom a baccalaureate degree will be required in the future;
- b. Be an individual working in the childcare industry and/or Head Start program who wishes to obtain a Child Development Associate Degree, Associate of Arts Degree, or Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education;
- c. Be enrolled in a North Dakota State college or university.

##### Environment Grant

Under provisions of SB 2013, passed by the 62nd Legislative Assembly, North Dakota public school districts may receive up to a \$5,000 grant award to support, enhance, or establish a new or expanded early childhood learning environment.

To qualify for the grant award, the applicant must complete the application for an Early Childhood Education Environment Grant (SFN 60086) and have either:

- a. Created new space for the district's early childhood education services; or
- b. Recently expanded the space of the district's early childhood education program.

#### Early Childhood Legislation

There are currently several bills in the North Dakota Legislature pertaining to early childhood education. The NDDPI is specifically tracking SB 2229 and HB 1429, as they would impact North Dakota school districts. HB 1429 would revise current language in North Dakota Century Code to allow districts to use their local funds to support early childhood education, with school board approval. SB 2229 would also revise the same law in North Dakota Century Code, as well as provide the department with an appropriation to offer early childhood education grants to North Dakota school districts.

SB 2229 was passed on to the Senate Appropriations Committee. A hearing was held on February 6, 2013. The bill received a "Do Not Pass" recommendation from the Senate Appropriations Committee and is now scheduled for the Senate Floor. HB 1429 passed the House Floor on February 18, 2013.

We will keep school personnel informed as to the status of this early childhood education legislation.

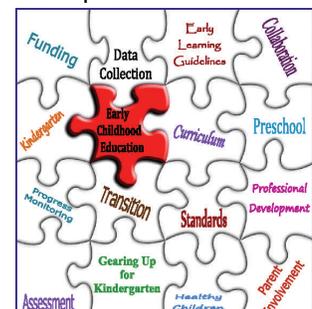
#### Uniting for Early Childhood

There was a Uniting for Early Childhood Day held on February 5, 2013, in the Great Hall of the State Capitol.

This event provided an opportunity for all early childhood entities and advocates in North Dakota to build awareness of early childhood issues that impact the health and well-being of our youngest North Dakota citizens. The goal of this event was to promote a unified voice for early childhood policy makers and the general public, in addition to serving as a networking opportunity for early childhood educators and advocates.

Uniting for Early Childhood Day was a non-partisan, statewide event sponsored by the Region VII Early Childhood Task Force and Healthy North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction had a booth at this event showcasing current early childhood initiatives within the department.



## School Year 2013-2014 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Application



The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Application for the 2013-2014 school year will be available March 25, 2013. Funding is available for “elementary” students—only those enrolled in grades K-8. The application will be mailed to the principal of each elementary school that had an October 2012 free and reduced percentage of 50 percent or higher. The application will also be posted on the [FFVP web page](#) for all elementary schools to download.

The application process is competitive and based on percentage of free and reduced priced eligible students (with priority given to those 50 percent and above), school demographic information, creativity of proposal, planned partnerships with additional agencies, and ability to maintain the program at the school and use funding by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. How well the current year’s money was spent will also be a factor.

Please read the following instructions carefully:

- Schools meeting the following criteria simply need to complete and mail in pages 3, 6, and 7:
  - \* Are currently participating in the FFVP with a 50 percent or higher free and reduced ratio, and
  - \* Have retained a 50 percent or higher free and reduced rating in the elementary grades (K-8) for the current school year 2012-2013 as reported in October 2012.
- Send the other pages only if there are significant changes to what was submitted for the 2012-2013 school year.
- Applications must be signed by the district’s authorized representative and the school food service director. Funds must flow through the school food service account.
- Schools not meeting the above criteria must complete the entire application.
- Applications may be faxed or mailed.
- Applications are due in the NDDPI Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Office no later than April 19, 2013. Mailed applications must be postmarked as of April 19, 2013.

If you have questions or need assistance filling out the application, please contact [Kaye Knudson](#) at (888) 338-3663.

---

## Title I Schools List Published

The 2012-2013 list of North Dakota [Title I](#) and [non-Title I](#) schools has been published on the Title I website.

The figures below summarize this information:

- 285 = Total Title I Schools
  - \* 119 = Schoolwide Title I Schools
  - \* 166 = Targeted Assistance Title I Schools
- 186 = Total Non-Title I Schools

## Research Corner

- **[Effective Programs for Elementary Science](#)**

Which science programs have been proven to help elementary students to succeed? To find out, this review by the Best Evidence Encyclopedia, summarizes evidence on three types of programs designed to improve the science achievement of students in grades K–6.

The evidence from studies that met the review's inclusion criteria supports a view that improving outcomes in elementary science depends on improving teachers' skills in presenting lessons, engaging and motivating students, and integrating science and reading. Technology applications that help teachers teach more compelling lessons and that use video to reinforce lessons also have promise.

- **[Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#)**

A Teaching and Learning Toolkit is available that provides guidance for teachers and schools on how to use its resources to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students. The toolkit provides a summary of educational research on 21 topics in terms of potential impact on attainment, strength of supporting evidence, cost, and applicability.

- **[Doing What Works](#)**

The *Doing What Works* website translates effective research-based education practices into practical tools that support and improve classroom instruction. Educators want to know what works based on the best available evidence and they want help implementing research-based practices. This website builds a bridge from research to action, and it helps educators improve student performance by providing information on how to implement effective education practices. The content on the website is organized into three areas:

- Learn what works – understand the research behind recommended practices.
- See how it works – understand how practices are implemented in schools.
- Do what works – access tools and templates to improve practices.

- **[What Works and What Doesn't for Boys vs. Girls](#)**

Child Trends has completed two new research briefs that examine programs and strategies that work, as well as don't work, for each gender:

- [What Works for Female Children and Adolescents: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions](#)
- [What Works for Male Children and Adolescents: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions](#)

- **[One-Size-Fits-All Approach Doesn't Work](#)**

In order to help all students achieve at enhanced levels, each student must have a schedule and an academic program tailored to address their individual needs. An expanded schedule is the linchpin to this individualized approach, allowing schools to offer double and sometimes triple doses of instruction and to tailor the instructional approach to best address student skill and knowledge gaps. With more time, teachers and administrators can use data to identify standards to review and re-teach and design learning opportunities – including one-on-one tutoring, small group work, and technology supported interventions – that help every student achieve mastery.



**21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Bidder's Workshops**

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is designed to support community learning centers that provide programs focused on helping children in high-need schools to succeed academically. These workshops are specifically for those interested in getting information on how to apply for a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant.

- Bismarck, ND – March 4, 2013 at the Comfort Inn – 1030 E Interstate Ave
- Minot, ND – March 5, 2013 at the Sleep Inn – 2400 10th Street SW
- Grand Forks, ND – March 6, 2013 at the Ramada – 1205 N 43<sup>rd</sup> St
- Fargo, ND – March 7, 2013 at the Hilton Garden Inn – 4351 17th Ave S

[Registration](#)

**Secondary Transition/Parent Involvement Conference**

April 11-13, 2013  
Seven Seas, Mandan, ND

[Registration](#)

**2013 Roughrider Health Promotion Conference**

May 28-31, 2013  
Medora, ND

[Registration](#)

**Fifth Annual NDEA Drop Out Summit**

June 5, 2013  
Bismarck High School, Bismarck, ND  
Watch for upcoming details.

**New Administrators' Workshop**

July 31-August 2, 2013  
Bismarck ND  
Watch for upcoming details.

**2013 Title I, Special Education, and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Fall Conference**

October 9-11, 2013  
Bismarck Civic Center, Bismarck, ND  
Watch for upcoming details.

## Questions and Answers

***The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction is committed to providing clear and transparent information to its constituents. Therefore, our concluding newsletter article will feature questions received from the field, along with the department's response or position on the topic.***

- Q. What will happen if North Dakota's ESEA Flexibility Waiver is not approved by the USDE?
- A. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) has a plan for implementing the ESEA Flexibility Waiver if approved by the United States Department of Education (USDE). However, we also have a plan for helping our schools and districts continue implementing the provisions under No Child Left Behind if our waiver is not approved. The state Title I office staff will sponsor training this spring to provide guidance to schools identified for improvement that will be specific to the implementation of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver or to the continuation of the provisions under the NCLB Act. In addition, under both scenarios, the NDDPI will continue to implement the Common Core Standards and the Teacher/Principal Evaluation guidelines.
- Q. How does the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction intend to help school districts with the rollout of the Common Core Standards?
- A. The purpose of the Common Core State Standards is to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents can better assist students in reaching their full potential. At a recent educational summit, hosted by the Missouri River Education Cooperative, discussion was held on how the various educational agencies throughout North Dakota can best collaborate in transitioning from the current content standards being used to measure student, school, and district proficiency to the new Common Core State Standards, which will begin to be assessed in the spring of 2015. Discussion also included the need for additional professional development opportunities within school districts to best serve and prepare our students for success in school and beyond. The NDDPI, under Superintendent Baesler's leadership, is building upon and enhancing current efforts in order to develop a comprehensive and definitive plan to assist schools and districts with implementation of the Common Core. As part of the plan, the NDDPI will work with the North Dakota curriculum initiative, REAs, and other educational entities to help North Dakota schools and districts effectively implement the Common Core Standards.
- Q. What is the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's position on proposed bills in the North Dakota State Legislature that would allow certain staff to carry a gun on school property?
- A. There are currently several bills in the North Dakota Legislature pertaining to weapons and school safety. The NDDPI strongly supports SB 2267, which would provide an appropriation for school district safety and deferred maintenance grants. These funds would allow school districts to strengthen and maximize the safety of school district staff and students.

The NDDPI believes that the issue of having weapons allowed on school property is best addressed by each local school board. The NDDPI strongly believes in preventive measures which will allow our school districts to develop strong emergency management plans. Keeping our students and staff safe and providing a nurturing environment is necessary to allow our students to succeed.

A top priority for the NDDPI is to help foster a safe climate in North Dakota schools by providing resources, professional development, and technical assistance.

The NDDPI will continue to work with our legislators to deliver these services to school districts across the state.

North Dakota  
Department of  
Public Instruction

600 E. Boulevard Ave.  
Dept. 201  
Bismarck, ND  
58505-0440

Phone:  
(701) 328-2260

Fax:  
(701) 328-2461

[www.dpi.state.nd.us](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us)