



# ConnectED

A Quarterly Publication of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

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

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## Volume I, Issue III

July-August-September 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.*

## Exciting News for ND Early Childhood Education

*By Tara Bitz, Federal Title Programs*

### North Dakota Pre-kindergarten Content Standards

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction has developed and adopted our state's first set of [Pre-kindergarten Content Standards](#). The ground-breaking new standards were designed with the advice of some of North Dakota's leading experts on early learning and child development, guided by public comment and multiple levels of review by national and state experts in early childhood education. The standards, guidance, and professional development opportunities are now available at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/index.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/index.shtm) on the ND DPI's early childhood website.

### New Pre-kindergarten Guidance

The ND DPI has also created [Pre-kindergarten Guidance](#), an early childhood educator's companion guide to implementing a high quality pre-kindergarten program. This guidance is intended to support statewide pre-kindergarten program implementation by offering an overview of the resources available, as well as guidance on compliance with both state and federal requirements. The

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## Smarter Balanced to develop student assessments

*By Rob Bauer, North Dakota State Assessment Coordinator*

North Dakota has joined the Smarter Balanced consortium as a governing state, according to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler. The state-led consortium is charged with developing student learning assessments that will become effective for the 2014-2015 school year.

"A great deal of time and research have gone into this decision," said Baesler. "The process started in 2010 and has included educators and other stakeholders from throughout North Dakota."

Baesler believes Smarter Balanced is a good fit for North Dakota, as the consortium includes a number of neighboring states with similar educational ideals and also offers opportunities for future regional cooperation. Regional

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**Smarter Balanced to develop student assessments** ([continued from page 1](#))

governing-member states include Montana, South Dakota, Iowa, Idaho, and Wyoming. Additional governing member states are Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Kansas, Missouri, Wisconsin, Michigan, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Connecticut, Delaware, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine.

“Our world is changing rapidly. Career needs and educational practices are evolving to adapt to that changing world,” Baesler said. “We look forward to this next step in helping our educational systems meet these needs, to continue to prepare North Dakota students to succeed in their careers and in college.” □ [\[Back\]](#)

**Volunteer high schools needed for field testing**

Volunteer high schools are still needed for field testing of the new assessment in Spring 2014. NDDPI is working with ETS to coordinate participation in the field test. Information about the [field test](#) may be found at <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/assess/memos/memo4.pdf>. Schools may [register](#) their interest in participating in the field test at <http://www.formstack.com/forms/fieldtest-smarterfieldtest>.

Schools may also contact Rob Bauer at (701) 328-2224 or via email to [rgbauer@nd.gov](mailto:rgbauer@nd.gov) for information or to express interest in participating. □ [\[Back\]](#)

**Annual Financial Audit—Do You Need One?**

*By Stephanie Gullickson, Unit Director, Fiscal Management*

Entities that expend \$500,000 or more in federal funds per year must arrange for an annual audit, often referred to as an A-133 single audit. Entities that expend less than \$500,000 annually in federal funds in a given year are not subject to the A-133 single audit requirement. The \$500,000 threshold is determined by calculating all federal funds that an entity expends (not simply receives), regardless of which federal agency provided the funds.

An email was sent to schools on August 29 to help the NDDPI determine who is subject to the A-133 audit requirement. **Response is required—every school must submit a completed form.** Please print the emailed form, check the applicable box (either the school district requires an A-133 audit for year ended June 30, 2013 or the school district does not require the A-133 audit) and return to the department.

As a reminder, all entities are subject to regular program and financial monitoring and oversight. Even if your school district expends less than \$500,000 in federal funds per year, ensure your school is ready for monitoring by retaining all financial records for a minimum of three years plus the current fiscal year. These documents may be requested during an audit or by the state during a program monitoring visit (i.e. during a Title I monitoring).

If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Gullickson, Fiscal Management Director at (701) 328-2176 or [sgullickson@nd.gov](mailto:sgullickson@nd.gov). □ [\[Back\]](#)

## Superintendent's Corner



I hope your 2013-2014 school year is off to a great start. Many diverse learning experiences have begun for our students this year. Our goal, as always, is to challenge our students intellectually, support them socially, and guide them toward independent thinking and problem solving.

Two words in the news and on our minds are "Common Core." Held recently were two professional development opportunities: The NDCEL Fall Conference and the Common Core Assessment Conference (formerly the NDEA Instructional Conference). Both offered opportunities to become familiar with and better understand the new college- and career-ready standards and assessment.

The bar has been raised and the road ahead—helping our students bridge the gaps, transitioning to the new assessments, and helping our communities understand how beneficial and important this is for our kids—is a work in progress. We will travel this road together, negotiate the bumps and potholes, and emerge on the other side better for our efforts. Our children are ready and able—together, we will help them become college- and career-ready, ready to succeed in life!

So, as you begin to delve into the necessary "curriculum" details about Abraham Lincoln, acute angles, and prepositional phrases, I take this opportunity to wish you all the best during the coming months. I am confident your commitment to excellence, combined with all the good work you do, will create yet another cohort of active, engaged learners.

I am thankful our state has so many talented and dedicated people devoted to our children's educations. On behalf of the ND DPI, I thank you for the incredible investment you are making with your time and talent for our children and I wish you the very best during this 2013-2014 school year!

*Kirsten Baesler*

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## NEWS FROM THE FIELD:

### REA Sponsors Professional Development for Area Schools

On August 19, 2013, the Northeast Education Services Cooperative (NESC) sponsored professional development training for schools in Devils Lake and the surrounding region. The NESC (one of eight REAs in North Dakota) held the training at the Lake Region Teacher Center and brought in Dr. Chrystyna Mursky, director of professional learning for the Smarter Balanced assessment consortium. The presentation gave area educators an opportunity to learn more about the new North Dakota state assessment and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

North Dakota officially adopted the CCSS in June 2011. The NESC has been collaborating with ND DPI and other partners in the state to develop and implement professional learning experiences for those who will be working with the new standards. The purpose of the CCSS 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 potentials.

North Dakota will soon be transitioning to a new state assessment that will measure student proficiencies of the CCSS. On July 10, 2013, Superintendent Baesler announced that North Dakota has selected Smarter Balanced as the new North Dakota state assessment.

The training was an exciting opportunity for many North Dakota educators to hear an expert present on how to strengthen statewide implementation of the CCSS and learn more about the new Smarter Balanced state assessment.  [\[Back\]](#)



*L to R: ND DPI's Ryan Townsend and State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler with Dr. Chrystyna Mursky, Smarter Balanced Consortium and Jennifer Carlson, NESC Executive Director*



### Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock Public School District Starts Pre-kindergarten Program



Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock Public School District (HMB) started its first-ever pre-kindergarten program on Wednesday, August 28, 2013. Brandt Dick, school superintendent, was excited to announce the program has six students enrolled. It will run on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons from 12:00 pm to 3:30 pm. HMB is fortunate to have an experienced, high quality pre-kindergarten instructor, Sheri Scherbenske. This is the third pre-kindergarten program Ms. Scherbenske has started, previously initiating programs at Kulm and Gackle-Streeter public school districts. Dick is excited about the program and believes it will greatly benefit the students enrolled throughout their educational careers.

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# Showcasing Education at its Best!

## 21st Century After School Programs Begin New School Year

The ND DPI 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) office recently held a grant competition to award 21st CCLC funds. The 21st CCLC program is federally legislated by Title IV, Part B of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The start of the 2013-2014 school year means that many students need a safe environment after school where they can receive extended academic services.

The North Valley Career and Technology Center was one of eight recipients of a 3-year 21st CCLC award. According to project director Lori Zahradka, the goal of the program is to provide students with enrichment opportunities designed to complement the students' school day programs. The North Valley Career and Technology Center has nine sites that serve the northeastern corner of the state. [\[Back\]](#)

*Third grade students at Century Elementary School in Grafton started out the 2013-2014 school year making fruit smoothies during the Extended School Program. In addition to learning how to make nutritious smoothies by using a recipe, Deb McKay, a family and consumer science instructor during the school day, helped the students identify and spell words that described the smoothies.*



*The Extended School Program focuses on academic enrichment. Students are expanding their science skills learning about vegetables.*

*The Extended School Program also offers opportunities for recreation and fitness.*

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## Timely Questions and Answers

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

**Q. Even though the ND DPI has withdrawn its ESEA Waiver Application, I've heard there are still plans to move forward with the principal and teacher evaluation system. Has this been defined yet?**

A. Yes, the Department is moving forward with this important work. Ongoing improvement is important throughout our public education system, which includes improving professional development and accountability through a consistent principal and teacher evaluation process. DPI recognizes that principals are at the heart of our public schools and their programs. Therefore, the principal evaluation expectations are being developed first, with the teacher evaluation guidelines to follow. Please see the article on [page 7](#) for more information. [\[Back\]](#)

**Q. Now that there is funding for statewide accreditation, what are the next steps?**

A. In order to become familiar with AdvancED and the process, training will be available at regional workshops throughout the state October 28 – November 1 (*see the calendar on page 12 for more information*).

The 2013-2014 school year will be the transition year to bring all schools on board with the process. Schools that currently use the NDMILE process for their continuous improvement will be able to continue to do so in the statewide accreditation process.

Starting in 2014-2015, all public schools will be included in the statewide accreditation process. The five-year cycle of external reviews for school will begin at that time. [\[Back\]](#)

**Q. I've heard concerns expressed about early childhood education programs being too rigorous for toddlers. How does DPI address these concerns?**

A. It is often said that “the work of childhood is play.” This is the approach DPI took in developing its groundbreaking Pre-K standards (*see page 1*), which encourage capitalizing on the play of children and helping them learn as they play. The new standards were designed with the advice of some of North Dakota's leading experts on early learning and child development, guided by public comment and multiple levels of review by national and state experts in early childhood education. They focus on play as the basis of learning, for example, environments where children can experiment with water, sand or other materials as they learn new concepts in math, science, communication, and social skills. Early learning activities help to prepare young children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. [\[Back\]](#)

## Principal and Teacher Evaluation System

Principals are at the heart of our public schools and their programs. This is why DPI is developing the principal evaluation expectations prior to beginning work on the teacher evaluation component.

DPI re-convened a group of North Dakota legislators; school district superintendents; high school, middle school, and elementary school principals and teachers; and representatives from higher education and the ND LEAD Center on August 15, 2013, to continue work on the state evaluation system and developing a model evaluation rubric for North Dakota.

The group met again on September 19, 2013, to continue this work. The committee and DPI have set a goal for a deliverable model evaluation rubric by the spring semester of 2014. When the program is fully implemented, every administrator and teacher will be evaluated every year using a DPI-approved evaluation tool. The annual evaluation process will be included as an assurance in statewide accreditation. The group will next meet on November 5, 2013.

DPI is also working with NDCEL, ND LEAD and the NDUS on developing a school leadership professional development program using the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) project that provides training and technical assistance, and prepares school leaders for increased accountability. □ [\[Back\]](#)

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## Indian Education News

Concerns about knowledge gaps and student achievement are, with good reason, in the news and top-of-mind. This is especially true for low-income students and students of color. The Education Trust recently published results of a study, *The State of Education for Native Students*, that looked at factors such as where Native American students live and go to school; how their experiences compare to white students; and graduation and college- and career-readiness. The study notes that, while there has been progress, “we still have a long way to go.” An overview of the research results can be found at [http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/NativeStudentBrief\\_0.pdf](http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/NativeStudentBrief_0.pdf).

In response to a request from ND DPI, McREL provided a *Menu of Possible Interventions for Native American Students*. The document brings together information from a variety of available literature and was compiled with help from national experts such as Dr. Dawn Mackety, and Jacob Tsoitigh, Indian Education Coordinator at the South Central Comprehensive Center at the University of Oklahoma. Included are guidance, practices, programs, strategies and resources for educators.

*Menu of Possible Interventions* recognizes that there is no single answer for all students or all situations, and provides a variety of options that address students; schools and districts; teaching strategies; and use of state and national programs and initiatives. Links are included to each of the programs and initiatives described, as well as to the resources included in the instructional strategies chart. *Menu of Possible Interventions* can be found at <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/progress/menus/menunativeam.pdf>.

If you have questions about the above information or other Indian Education topics, please contact Lucy Fredericks, ND DPI Director of Indian Education at (701) 328-1718 or via email to [lkfredericks@nd.gov](mailto:lkfredericks@nd.gov). □ [\[Back\]](#)

## Early Childhood Education News [\(continued from page 1\)](#)

guidance is available at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/index.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/index.shtm) on the department's early childhood website.

### **Grant Awarded to Kindergarten Entry Assessment Consortium**

ND DPI has joined a consortium of states working on a new kindergarten entry assessment. Led by North Carolina, the consortium was recently awarded a grant of more than \$6.1 million to "improve the quality, validity, and reliability" of such assessments. The U.S. Department of Education indicates the primary purpose of the assessment will be to guide instruction and give teachers and students a meaningful tool to adjust teaching and learning to meet or exceed standards across multiple domains of child development.

The grant will be used to enhance or develop a kindergarten entry assessment system, helping improve student outcomes, and promote early learning. The assessment will gather a variety of data (e.g., observations, conversations, work samples, tasks) from multiple sources (e.g., teachers, support staff, families, and community members). The first administration of the K-3 Assessment will be at kindergarten entry, with the resulting data generating a Child Profile that provides a more complete picture of the whole child and making information available to both teachers and students that will be used to guide teaching and learning. Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Arizona, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington DC, and South Carolina, along with North Dakota and lead state North Carolina, make up the consortium.

### **Early Childhood Care and Education Study**

Senate Bill 2229, passed during the 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly, mandates a study of the development, delivery, and administration of comprehensive early childhood care and early childhood education in our state. The study must include an examination of the availability, quality, and cost of service offered by existing public and private sector providers, the projected need for services during the coming ten to twenty years, and the ability of public and private sector providers to address the expansion of facilities or the creation of additional facilities.

Numerous state departments and local agencies statewide have voiced their support of early care and education programs, projects, and initiatives. A balanced 30 member committee representing child care, Head Start, higher education, public and private education, special education, advocacy groups, and North Dakota state departments is currently being developed.

As the study proceeds, new information will be posted and updated at on the [ND DPI website](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/index.shtm) at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/index.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/index.shtm).

### **Early Childhood Continuing Education Grants**

Also passed during the 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly, House Bill 1013 makes North Dakota residents eligible for grants of up to \$1,200. To qualify for the grant award, the eligible recipient must:

- 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.

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## Direct Certification in School Nutrition Programs

By Linda Schloer, Child Nutrition & Food Distribution

Direct Certification is a process used to identify students receiving benefits from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP - formerly Food Stamps) and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). These students are automatically eligible for free school meals.

Direct Certification benefits schools as much as it does students and their families. When a student is Directly Certified, their parents/guardians do not have to fill out an application form and schools do not have to process the form. Since applications aren't needed, meal benefits may be provided quickly, preventing unpaid meal charges or students who go hungry.

The Direct Certification system in the State Automated Reporting System (STARS) provides updated lists of direct certification eligible students to districts once their new school year enrollment is uploaded. Complete [instructions for the Direct Certification system](#) are available at this link: [http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/child/new/direct\\_cert\\_training.pdf](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/child/new/direct_cert_training.pdf).

Please direct questions regarding Direct Certification to Linda Schloer at [lkschloer@nd.gov](mailto:lkschloer@nd.gov).  [\[Back\]](#)

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### Early Childhood Education News *(continued from page 8)*

#### Learning Environment Grants

House Bill 1013 also makes North Dakota public school districts eligible to receive grant awards of up to \$5,000 to support, enhance, or establish a new or expanded early childhood learning environment. To qualify for the grant award, the applicant must have either:

1. Created new space for the district's early childhood education services or;
2. Recently expanded the space of the district's Early Childhood Education program.

#### Allowable uses for grant funds

Allowable use of learning environment grant funds include costs incurred to prepare the physical learning space for early childhood programs, such as purchasing and installing child-sized tables and chairs, low shelving, flooring, lighting, wall and window coverings, and lowering existing or installing new child-sized sinks and toilets. Please keep in mind this list is not inclusive; other items may be considered as allowable if they meet the purpose of the grant.

For more information about Early Childhood Learning programs, contact Tara Bitz at (701) 328-4646 or via email to [tbitz@nd.gov](mailto:tbitz@nd.gov).  [\[Back\]](#)

### ECE Grants Available: Learning Environment & Continuing Education

Grants are available for early childhood learning environment efforts (up to \$5,000) and ECE continuing education (up to \$1,200).

Check out the [links](#) on the DPI website at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/grants.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/grants.shtm)!

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## Safety and Health Are Top Priorities

*By Gail Schauer, Safe and Healthy Schools*

With a new school year starting, the Safe and Healthy Schools Unit would like to encourage schools to make and keep the health and safety of students and buildings a priority. Students who come to school hungry, tired, scared or even hung-over cannot learn. The balance between health and academics is well documented as a research/evidenced-based practice for effective learning.

We recommend schools use a team concept to review data that continually drives policy and practice. The [Safe and Healthy Schools Unit \(SHS\) website \(www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/index.shtm\)](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/index.shtm) and SHS staff can provide professional development, prevention resources, and technical assistance on a plethora of topics to include alcohol, drugs, tobacco, suspension, expulsion, truancy, school climate, bullying, discipline, health education, physical education, suicide prevention, school nursing services, emergency health care services, weapons, violence, drop-out prevention, crisis management planning, playground safety, general disease control and management, the suspension, expulsion and truancy report, as well as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Several bills were passed during the 2013 legislative session to ensure students' safety and health in school. Information on these bills can be found on the SHS website.

- ★ **Youth Suicide Prevention Training** (Senate Bill 2306) requires that all school districts to provide professional development relating to youth suicide risk to middle school and high school teachers and administrators.
- ★ **CPR/AED Training.** Eligible school districts and nonpublic schools may request reimbursement for providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) training to high school students (Senate Bill 2238).
- ★ **Mobile dental care services** (House Bill 1135) are expanded through increased appropriations which provide dental treatment, prevention, and education to low-income and underserved children ages 0 through 21. Eligible schools must have at least 50% of their student population enrolled in free and reduced school lunch programs.
- ★ **Medication administration** (House Bill 1276) allows districts to establish a program for providing medication to students that includes authorizing individuals to provide medication to a student if the individual has received education and training in medication administration and has received written consent of the student's parent or guardian.
- ★ **Safety/deferred maintenance grants.** Appropriations for school district safety and deferred maintenance grants (Senate Bill 2267) will assist eligible districts in addressing school safety. Funds may include alarms, cameras, electronic door locks, emergency response call buttons, and other similar equipment designed to minimize the potential for a crisis and maximize the safety of students and staff. Additional information, including a list of eligible districts, will be available in November.

We invite you to check out the [Safe and Healthy Schools \(SHS\) website](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/index.shtm) at <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/index.shtm> and contact us any time throughout the year with any questions or concerns you may have:

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## Tips to Improve Your School's Special Education Student Achievement

By Bob Rutten, ND DPI Office of Special Education

Last school year more than three-fourths of North Dakota parents who responded to a statewide special education survey reported that their children's schools "facilitated their involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities." This school year, the ND DPI is once again promoting the use of its online parent survey as a means of addressing ND State Performance Plan (SPP) for Special Education Indicator 8, Parent Involvement.

The SPP is an accountability tool for both the state and local school districts. The purpose of the SPP is to provide a measurement of our state's and districts' performance on key special education indicators. Some of the indicators that are measured include.

- The percent of youth with IEPs graduating with regular diplomas.
- The participation rate and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments.
- The percent of students with disabilities removed from regular education classes (LRE).
- The post-school outcomes of students who received special education and related services.

Local school districts and special education units should be analyzing their Indicator 8 data as a means of understanding how parents view their children's special education services. This brief online survey asks parents to respond to the following 10 items:

### My child's teachers and school:

1. Offer training and information that will help me participate fully in the IEP meetings.
2. Treat me as an equal partner when we are planning for my child.
3. Use the ideas and suggestions that I share at the meeting.
4. Encourage me to speak up at the IEP meetings.
5. Encourage me to participate in writing my child's IEP.
6. Carried out my child's plan last year as written and discussed.
7. Are carrying out my child's plan this year as written and discussed.
8. Share information with me on the progress my child has made on his/her IEP goals.
9. My child's general education teacher(s) make me feel comfortable when I have questions or concerns.
10. My child's special education teacher makes me feel comfortable when I have questions or concerns.

### Get the word out!

Help increase your district's or special education unit's rate of return on the NDDPI [Special Education Parent Survey](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/survey/speced.asp) with a brief article in your newsletter. The survey and instructions are on the NDDPI website at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/survey/speced.asp](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/survey/speced.asp).

Several North Dakota school districts and special education units have highlighted the NDDPI Special Education Parent Survey in their local newsletters and websites. Last October, the Fargo Public School District included an article about the parent survey in their online district newsletter. This also appeared in the local newspaper and was an excellent way to promote completion of the survey by parents of students who receive special education and related services.

Make sure your students' parents know about the survey and encourage them to complete it. Then use your district's or special education unit's data to plan any helpful improvements suggested by the survey results. Remember: *Increased parent involvement is a proven strategy for improving student achievement.* □ [\[Back\]](#)



Date	Event	Contact	Register
Nov. 1-2	<b><u>Practical Nutrition</u></b> (Bismarck, Comfort Inn) This course is for foodservice managers, specialists and assistants.	<a href="#">Kaye Knudson</a> or <a href="#">Tara Koster</a> (701) 328-2294 (888) 338-3663	<a href="#">Register Here</a>
Nov. 4	<b><u>Introduction to AdvanceEd Education Improvement</u></b> (Dickinson) An introduction to the AdvancED school improvement process and the tools available in ASSIST.	<a href="#">Angie Koppang</a> (888) 413-3669, ext. 5757	
Nov. 14-15	<b><u>ND Learning Forward Conference</u></b> (Bismarck, Ramada Hotel)	<a href="#">Kari Sauer</a> (800) 804-8550	<a href="#">Register Here</a>
Nov. 15-16	<b><u>Sanitation and Safety</u></b> (Bismarck, Comfort Inn) This course is for foodservice managers, specialists, and assistants.	<a href="#">Kaye Knudson</a> or <a href="#">Tara Koster</a> (701) 328-2294 (888) 338-3663	<a href="#">Register Here</a>
Nov. 20-23	<b><u>National Association of Biology Teachers Conference</u></b> (Atlanta, GA) This conference features renowned speakers, hands-on workshops, informative sessions and special events.	Jill Drupa Membership Services Coordinator (888) 501-6228 Email: <a href="mailto:conference@nabt.org">conference@nabt.org</a>	<a href="#">Register Here</a> or <a href="#">Print Registration Form</a>
Nov. 25-26	<b><u>Be Fit 2 Learn Training</u></b> (Minot, Jim Hill Middle School) The goal of Be Fit 2 Learn is to enable K-12 staff and students to understand the benefit of 60 minutes of activity a day and therefore become more physically active in the classroom, on the playground, and throughout the school day. The two-day workshop is designed for participants to learn classroom design that can improve academic achievement, teach behavior and create connections	<a href="#">Judy Thomson</a> (701) 328-2722	Register with <a href="#">Sarah Uppgren</a> (701) 328-2228
Dec. 12-14	<b><u>National Science Teachers Association Area Conference</u></b> (Denver, CO)		<a href="#">Register Here</a>
Feb. 2-5, 2014	<b><u>National Title I Conference</u></b> (San Diego, CA)		
March 21-22 2014	<b><u>North Dakota Council of Teachers of Mathematics</u></b> (Fargo, ND)		
April 3-6, 2014	<b><u>National Science Teachers Association National Conference</u></b> (Boston, MA)		<a href="#">Register Here</a> or <a href="#">Print Registration Form</a>

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## Research Corner

### Broader Data Use Could Improve Parent Involvement

*Education Week*, May 30, 2013

In her *Inside School Research* blog entry, [Study: Broader Data Use Could Improve Parent Involvement](#), Sarah D. Sparks highlights a study, [Harnessing Data and Analytics 2.0](#), by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute which concludes that school leaders should look beyond data from their own school or district. Gathering and analyzing data from their "education ecosystem," including from charter and private schools, could help schools improve more quickly and would allow for fairer comparisons among schools, according to the study. *Note: Free registration is required to access Education Week's online content.*

### Technology Access Alone Does Not Equal Increased Achievement

Researchers from the National Bureau of Economic Research have published a new working paper, [Experimental Evidence on the Effects of Home Computers on Academic Achievement Among Schoolchildren](#), that explores the relationship of home computer access to children's educational achievement. The authors found no effects, positive or negative, on a range of outcomes.

The authors conducted a randomized controlled trial with 1,123 students ages 11-16 without home computers from 15 schools across California in the largest-ever experiment involving provision of free home computers. Half of the students were randomly selected to receive free computers, while the other half served as the control group. The goal of the study was to evaluate the effects of home computers alone, so no training or other assistance was provided to the students who received the free computers.

At the end of the school year, data from the schools was used to measure the impact of the home computers on numerous educational outcomes. Findings showed that, although computer ownership and use increased substantially, there were no effects on grades, test scores, credits earned, attendance, or disciplinary actions in the experimental group.

Robert Slavin, director of the Center for Research and Reform in Education, discussed a similar topic in his March blog post, [Can Educators Turn Silicon Into Gold?](#), about Dr. Sugata Mitra's "hole in the wall" experiment, in which Dr. Mitra made a single computer freely available to children in a Delhi slum. In his post, Slavin says, "If access to computers were decisive, middle-class children, at least, would be gaining rapidly. Admittedly, the technology itself keeps getting better and faster and easier to use, but from thirty years of experience in the developed world, it seems unlikely that access alone will lead children to become wise and capable."

### ["Redshirting" in Kindergarten Still Subject to Debate \(ABC News\)](#)

Nationwide, parents delay kindergarten enrollment for 4-5.5 percent of children, but it's unclear how much students benefit in the long term from this practice, also called "redshirting." A joint study by researchers at the University of Virginia and Stanford University found that most redshirted students are from white, high-income families, and the reasons for redshirting include emotional, social, and/or academic readiness. A 2011 report from the National Center for Education Statistics showed higher scores for both on-time and delayed-entry kindergarteners. A National Bureau of Economic Research report in 2011 found kindergarten a year late reduces the probability of repeating third grade and increases scores for 10th grade math and reading. [\[Back\]](#)