

LEARNING MATTERS

January 23, 2012

Issue 18, Volume 8

Learning Matters highlights the most important issues coming out of the Minnesota Department of Education including press releases, policy announcements, grant and scholarship opportunities and other items of interest.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

- ***Secretary Duncan, Governor Dayton Hosted Town Hall on Education Reform***

On Friday, January 20, Commissioner Cassellius moderated a dialogue with Governor Mark Dayton and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, highlighting Minnesota's nation-leading education reforms and discussing future efforts to support students.

Discussion focused on Minnesota's successes in improving education for its students – including being awarded a Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge, Investing in Innovation (i3), and Promise Neighborhood grants – and provided audience members with the opportunity to ask questions about the current education reforms taking place. The town hall forum was held at Irondale High School in New Brighton.

PRESS RELEASES

- ***Summer Food Service Program Needs Sponsors to Feed Children***

The Minnesota Department of Education is looking for organizations interested in providing free meals for needy children 18 and under during summer 2012. When school is out, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) fills the “Nutrition gap” at feeding sites operated by approved sponsors. [See the January 18 press release.](#)

- ***Governor Mark Dayton to Hold First American Indian Education Summit***

On January 9th, Governor Dayton convened the first Governor's American Indian Education Summit. The summit brought together tribal and state education leaders, as well as key stakeholders, to address barriers and challenges currently facing the state's Indian students and begin developing shared strategies to improve student achievement and outcomes for Indian children. [See the January 6 press release.](#)

- ***Applications Now Accepted for National Green Ribbon Schools Recognition***

Throughout Minnesota, schools are making a conscious effort to promote energy efficiency – both in the classroom and in practice. Now, the Minnesota Department of Education is partnering with the U.S. Department of Education to recognize these schools with the newly launched Green Ribbon Schools Program. [See the January 5 press release.](#)

- ***Minnesota Department of Education Partners with Education Minnesota to Hear Minnesota Teachers' Ideas about Principal and Teacher Evaluation***

Education Minnesota (EdMN) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have formed a joint venture with The VIVA Teachers' Project to conduct an online "Idea Exchange" to get teachers' ideas about designing and implementing Minnesota's new principal and teacher evaluation systems. [See the January 3 press release.](#)

- ***Commissioner Cassellius to Bring Statewide Tour to Mankato, Marshall***

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has announced the next steps in a series of statewide public meetings to provide information about Minnesota's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waiver request. [See the January 3 press release.](#)

MISCELLANEOUS

- ***Reading Well by Third Grade Information Sessions***

A series of information sessions on the "Reading Well by Third Grade" initiative were offered in the fall and are [available on the MDE website](#). The next event will be on February 13. If a district has not yet participated in the information sessions, now would be a great time to get involved. [See the registration form for upcoming information sessions.](#)

Questions can be addressed to Kari Ross, State Reading Specialist, at kari.d.ross@state.mn.us or 651-582-8455.

- ***Access to National Repository of Online Curriculum (NROC) Courses***

Through a partnership between the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities, the University of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Learning Commons has been established as a clearinghouse of online resources available to students and educators in Minnesota.

In addition to the resources available on the [Minnesota Learning Commons website](#), the partnership has negotiated an agreement with NROC to provide select downloadable NROC courses to Minnesota schools who wish to download these courses to their individual or hosted Moodle sites. [Visit the NROC website for more information.](#)

- ***Voluntary Paraprofessional Credential***

In compliance with Minnesota Law, the Minnesota Board of Teaching is pleased to announce that Minnesota paraprofessionals may now apply for Voluntary Paraprofessional Credential that will recognize additional training and preparation in working with Minnesota

students. The guidelines and competency grid are available on the [Board of Teaching Web page](#).

- ***Host AmeriCorps Promise Fellows***

The Minnesota Alliance With Youth is pleased to invite schools, community organizations, government agencies, and others to submit a proposal to host AmeriCorps Promise Fellows. In order to ensure all youth achieve success in school, work, and life, we focus on four strategies: 1) strengthening youth success in school and learning, 2) increasing youth contribution through service & leadership opportunities, 3) developing and magnifying youth voice, and 4) promoting collaboration and innovation. Our goal is to ensure every young person graduates school ready for college, work, and life and has a vision for their future. To learn more, [visit the Minnesota Alliance With Youth website](#).

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