



INTERCOM

Bismarck Public Schools weekly employee newsletter

May 27, 2010

Reflection on teaching and learning

I have been doing a lot of thinking about teaching and learning lately. Below are some of my current beliefs.

1. Teachers are the key to student learning. Research I have read claims that teachers really are the key to the progress of students, especially marginal students. A series of outstanding teachers greatly improves achievement and a series of marginal or poor teachers can be devastating to a learner, especially a struggling learner.
2. Carefully choosing what to teach is important. There is not time to teach everything and information is proliferating, so educators must decide what is most beneficial to the overall education of the student. Schools and school districts need to come to agreement on what is important to teach so that all students get a consistent core education.
3. Teacher preparation for class is important. Often the extent to which students are engaged comes down to how well the teacher has prepared for the lesson.
4. Order and organization are important. Students can relax and learn in a classroom where student and teacher behavior is predictably respectful, class time is productive, and interruptions are minimal.
5. Mastering teaching takes many years and a lot of effort. Researchers claim that to master anything takes 10,000 hours.
6. Relationships are important but are no substitute for effective teaching.
7. It matters that disadvantaged students become proficient in reading, writing, and math. Students from disadvantaged families often play catch-up their whole school experience. They enter school behind in general background information

which other students have gained by being read to, rich family conversations, and travel. How do we make up the years lost in gaining general concepts and vocabulary?

8. Appropriate use of technology can enhance teaching and engage students.

9. Frequent assessment of student learning is important as well as frequent feedback to students about their learning progress.

10. Teachers need to help students learn to evaluate their own progress against classroom, school, and district benchmarks.

During the month of April, I took time to observe eight secondary teachers who were recommended by their principals as being effective teachers. All of these teachers had some aspects of their teaching in common. All of them had put a great deal of preparation into their lessons or units, had an agenda for the day or week posted on the white board, and required students to be in charge of their learning by evaluating their individual progress. All of the teachers used technology appropriately to enhance the lesson not to distract from it. Students were actively engaged in the classroom activities and the activities were accessible to a range of abilities. The classroom atmosphere was relaxed but purposeful and it was apparent that classroom norms had been established early on and reinforced over time.

Teaching and learning is on my mind as I prepare to travel to my new job in which I will be much more involved with classroom teaching and students. I'm looking forward to my new challenge.

That being said, my years with the Bismarck School District will always be the capstone of my career. I will always cherish the memory of work-

ing in this very special school district where parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and school board work together preparing students in the best way we know how for life as productive adults.

Thanks for everything.

*Paul Johnson
Superintendent*

Calendar Call

- May 30 **CHS Graduation**
1 pm Civic Center
BHS Graduation
5 pm Civic Center
- June 2 **Elementary Principals**
9:00 am Hughes #1
- June 14 **School Board Mtg.**
5:15 pm City/Court Bldg.
- June 16 **Secondary School Admins.**
7:30 am Hughes #3
Leadership Team Mtg.
9:00 am Hughes #1, 2
- June 23 **Elementary Principals**
9:00 am Hughes #1
- June 28 **School Board Mtg.**
5:15 pm City/Court Bldg.
- July 12 **School Board Mtg.**
5:15 pm City/Court Bldg.
- Aug 9 **School Board Mtg.**
5:15 pm City/Court Bldg.

Congrats to...

...teacher Richard Bahm and the staff and business partners of the Bismarck Technical Center for successfully completing and attaining national certification from the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) for the Automotive Collision program.



Credit Courses

√ **Do you have 15 hours of Technology Latte Session participation?** If so, you are eligible to apply for a graduate credit. The criteria/steps for successful credit acquisition are posted at <http://blogs.edutech.nodak.edu/bp-stech/latte-sessions/>. **The deadline for application is June 4.** Credit is offered twice each year - December and May.

√ **University of Mary - Offering Online Graduate Course: Edu 631:** Supervision of student teachers, 2 graduate credits, June 14-July 23. To register, contact Leona Friedig, 355-8058.

√ **Excellent Teachers Needed!** Are you interested in making a difference in an aspiring teacher's future? Are you also interested in growing professionally, participating in a collaborative learning experience and giving back to education? If you answered "yes" to both of these questions, then Dickinson State University is offering a course for you! Supervision of Student Teachers prepares you to be an effective cooperating teacher and enables you to meet the ND requirements for student teacher placement.

The course will be held on the BSC campus Monday, June 21 and Tuesday, June 22 from 9 am-3 pm. Graduate credit (\$60/credit) is available plus a \$10 registration fee. If you are not registering for credit, the cost for the course is \$10. Since space is limited, contact Lori Gibson soon at 224-2481 or e-mail Lori.Gibson@dsu.nodak.edu to register.

√ **UTTC is sponsoring a Summer Education Institute: June 23-June 25,** 1 UND grad credit, 1 UTTC undergraduate credit, and 2 UTTC CEU credits. Free to the first 150 registrants and a stipend of \$300 for participants. The theme for the conference is Connecting Students to Our Environment Through Experiential Learning and American Indian Culture. Registration forms available at www.uttc.edu or contact Dr. Jennifer Janecek-Hartman, jjanecekhartman@uttc.edu or 255-3285 ext. 1396.

√ **Supervision of Student Teacher – Digging Deeper:** Are you interested in obtaining more tools to support your pre-service teacher? Has it been a while since you have taken the supervision course and you feel you need a refresher? Have you recently taken the supervision course, but are interested in learning more about effective communication with pre-service teachers in good times . . . and in bad? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then DSU has the course for you!

The course will be held at BSC campus on Monday, June 28 and Tuesday, June 29 from 9 am-3 pm. Graduate credit (\$60/credit) is available plus a \$10 registration fee. If you are not registering for credit, the cost for the course is \$10. Since space is limited, contact Lori Gibson soon at 224-2481 or e-mail Lori.Gibson@dsu.nodak.edu to register.

√ **Geographically FIT (Forestry Institute for Teachers):** 2 graduate credits, August 2-5, in Western ND. This four-day learning experience sponsored by the ND Geographic Alliance and ND Forest Service that will take place in a classroom on wheels. The charter bus will travel to many sites so teachers can learn about the geography, geology and forestry of the region. Begins in Belfield and includes a trip to the Ponderosa Pine Forest, the Logging Camp Ranch and north unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. US Forest Service staff, on site in the National Grasslands, will discuss management, energy and grazing issues. A trip through the Killdeer Mountains is included on the way to Dickinson where the city forester will lead a "walk about" town to observe Community Forestry. To register, contact ND Geographic Alliance, marilyn.weiser@minotstateu.edu, 838-6835, 721-6248, 858-3063, 1-800-235-1948.

Jeans Day: over \$13,000 collected!

Bismarck Public Schools employees have contributed over \$13,378 in Jeans Day money this year! Charities this year were ND Long Term Care, American Cancer, American Lung Assoc., Medcenter One Amber's Dream, Ruth Meiers House, Pride Manchester House, Haiti Red Cross, Adult Abused Resources, Dakota Center for Independent Living, and the Roughrider Honor Flight.

Thank you for your generosity!

Community Corner

√ **JA casino night: Friday, June 11,** 6-10 pm, at Apple Creek Country Club. Limited number of tickets available. Register online at www.bismarckmandan.com/events or www.bismanja.org.

√ **Party for Connie Sprynczynatyk:** BSC and the Chamber are hosting an event to recognize Connie's 32 years of community service on June 29, 5:30-7 pm, BSC Energy Center.

√ **Neighbors Network:** Needs a queen size bed frame and bunk beds. To donate, contact Sylvia Hauck at 527-8464.

√ **Neighbors Network:** Needs a washer and dryer. To donate, contact Joan Falter, 323-4629.

√ **Snap Fitness Summer Special for BPS teachers/staff: Free** enrollment plus only \$75 for June, July and August. Check out www.snapfitness.com/bismarck for more information.

√ **Summer Massage Special:** 1 hour massage for \$25 with a BPS name badge. Schedule an appointment with Rissa Williams, Riverside parent/massage therapist, 701-340-0474.

Job Opportunitites

Deadline: May 31
Choir Teacher (66.67%)

Medical Careers Instructor

Early Intervention Specialist -
Speech Pathologist

Deadline: June 6
Positive Behavior Support Coach
(50%)

For a detailed job description and to apply, go to bismarckschools.org "Job Opportunities" link.



Have a great summer and see you in the fall!