



# Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children



Newsletter

Vol. 16, No. 2

January 2005

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE INFO  
ON PAGE 3



MAIL-IN  
BALLOT  
INSIDE

POSTMARK DEADLINE:  
FEBRUARY 11, 2005

### IN THIS ISSUE

State Conference info .....	1
Letter from President .....	2
Board of Directors List .....	2
MNCEC Mission & Goals .....	2
Election Candidates .....	3
Federal Government Websites .....	5
Bridging the Cultural Gap .....	6
IDEA Reauthorized .....	7
CCBD News .....	7
MNCEC CAN Update .....	7
Geometry Curriculum .....	8
eMentoring Project .....	8
In Memorium: Elmer Anderson .....	8
What is a "Star Reporter" .....	9
MN School Health Ed Conference ...	9
Calendar of Events .....	9
Intentional Inviting .....	10
Influencing Public Policy .....	10
Membership Report .....	11
Letter from the Editor .....	12

Election Ballot enclosed

## 2005 Special Education Conference "BrainStorming...Amazing Ideas for Effective Classroom Practice"

February 23-25, 2005

Duluth Entertainment Convention Center



The 2005 conference committee recently completed their selection of breakout session presentations for the February conference! During the three sessions on Thursday and the single breakout session on Friday, attendees at the conference will choose from a wide variety of sessions. The breakout sessions will be of interest to elementary, middle, and secondary teaching staff as well as administrators and support staff. Topics include best practice procedures, inclusive practices, research in the field of special education, NCLB and IDEA updates, and, thanks to evaluation feedback from last year, several sessions have been targeted toward staff who work with ECSE and Autism - There is bound to be something for everyone at each of the hour long sessions!

And don't forget our great speakers! Larry Brendtro will facilitate the Wednesday preconference on reclaiming youth at risk. Our motivational keynoter on Thursday will be Frosty (Forest) Troy speaking on what's right in education today. On Friday Marilee Springer will speak on current trends, research, and applications of brain based learning and how it relates to special education.

Watch for conference registration information to be in the mail, as well as on the web page ([www.mncec.org](http://www.mncec.org)). Record attendance is anticipated not only by conference attendees but also in the exhibit hall as over 120 exhibitors and vendors from across the country have been invited to attend! Be sure to spread the word about the conference to your special education and general education colleagues - everyone is welcome!

The conference committee would again like to say, "Thank You!" to all who provided input, comments, and suggestions at last year's conference. They have listened and are hoping to make the upcoming MNCEC/CCBD conference better than ever!



# Letter from the President

by Melissa Schaller

Election years are generally exciting or nail biting experiences depending on your perspective. This year has been particularly interesting. While the IDEA is up for reauthorization and has been for some time it did not come to the forefront as an election issue. I expect now though that reauthorization will be something to watch.

Reauthorization is an important topic for people working in the field of special education and for children with disabilities. There are many good resources to check out for details and summaries about what is going on. For regular updates, check out <http://www.wrightslaw.com/news/idea2002.htm>. Additionally, the national CEC website has links to some good resources on their home page at <http://www.cec.sped.org/>.

On the home front, Minnesota CEC has been working to develop a legislative platform through Children's Action Network (CAN) to use in lobbying legislators in St. Paul. If you haven't received a copy of this document already look for it to come in the mail to you soon. We have discussed the idea of a legislative platform for some time now and decided to act on our goal to define involvement in policy and legislation. A legislative platform is one way we will do that this year.

Knowledge of the issues involved in educating students with disabilities is important for continued progress. Our day-to-day routine can keep us quite busy, but staying informed is essential in order to move forward.

## Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children's Mission

To improve practices and resources for persons working on behalf of individuals with exceptionality in the state of Minnesota.

## Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children's Goals

- To promote and utilize systems for timely communication with our membership.
- To promote quality professional development opportunities including a quality conference.
- To support the professional development of pre-service teachers.
- To increase our involvement in political issues impacting our membership and the individuals they serve.

## 2004 – 05 MN CEC Board of Directors

- President:** Melissa Schaller  
**President Elect:** Larry Iwen  
**Past President:** Claudine Knoblauch  
**Secretary:** Mark Krug  
**Treasurer:** LaVonne See  
**CAN Coordinator:** Bryce Fornes-Bates  
**Membership:** Mary McGrath  
**Representative Assembly:** Steven Kaatz  
 Carol Long  
**Student Advisor:** Dan Gregory  
 Marilyn Hukriede  
**Publications:** Carol Long  
**Newsletter Layout:** Lynne Olson

- Directors:**  
 Kathy Arnoldi  
 Brad Benson  
 Gail Craig  
 Jeanne Danneker  
 Krista Fisher  
 Roberta Kaufman  
 Gary Lewis  
 Nancy Recibe  
 Jim Smith  
 Mary Ellen Wade

- Divison Representatives:**  
 Lonna Moline, CCB  
 Jane Roundtree, DEC  
 Darryl Miller, CASE/MASE  
 Paula Krippner, DCDT

- Student Advisors:**  
 Mary Voss/ Manuel Berrera, UM-Duluth  
 Steven Kaatz, Bethel  
 David Rogers, St. Cloud State  
 Linda Svobodny, MN State Moorhead

**Website:** [www.mncec.org](http://www.mncec.org)



# MNCEC Board of Directors Elections



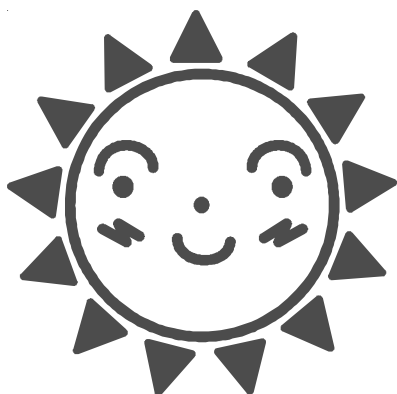
*Editor's Note: It's that time of year again! Time for MNCEC Board of Directors Elections. Below you will find biographical information for each of the nominees for this year's elections for President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Director. Review your choices, mark your ballot on the enclosed self-addressed stamped postcard and mail by February 11. Thank you!*

## **President:**

**Vote for one**

### **Jeanne Danneker**

Jeanne E. Danneker has 18 years of experience as an elementary school special education teacher. She taught in both resource and inclusive classroom settings. She was a consultant for the Hiawatha Valley Education District, specializing in helping high schools and agencies prepare students for the transition from school to adulthood. She earned her Ph. D from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and teaches in the Educational Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Her doctoral dissertation focused on self-determination and elementary student-led IEPs. Jeanne has been a Director-at-Large on the Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children for two years. She is dedicated to MN CEC's mission "to improve the practices and resources of persons working on behalf of individuals with exceptionality in the State of Minnesota."



## **Secretary:**

**Vote for one**

### **Roberta Kaufman**

Roberta is currently a teacher on special assignment with the St. Paul Public Schools, where she is developing a first year special education teacher coaching project. Her career includes teaching K-12 special education in South Dakota, serving as executive director for the Center for Excellence Across Disciplines at Huron University, Huron, South Dakota and Dean of the College of Education at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

## **Treasurer:**

**Vote for one**

### **Mark Krug**

Mark Krug is currently a Special Education Supervisor at Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916. He is starting his 17th year with Northeast Metro and has been a special educator for the past 22 years. He has worked with students with challenging behaviors, both as a teacher and as a behavior specialist. His current role is to provide supervision and due process support to staff in the Alternate Learning Program, a federal setting IV for students with maladaptive acting out behaviors. He has been a member of CEC throughout his professional career and has served as President of MN CCBBD as well as Board Member and Secretary for MN CEC.

## **Representative**

### **Assembly:**

**Vote for one**

### **Carol Long**

Serving on the MNCEC Executive Board and editing the newsletter for the past three years has been a privilege and one I hope to continue. As a board member, I have met dedicated professionals across the state and had the opportunity to represent MNCEC at the confirmation hearings for the Minnesota Education Commissioner last spring.

I received my preparation in Special Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Before earning my doctorate I taught students with developmental disabilities in grades 1-9. Currently, I am a faculty member at Winona State University in the Special Education Department.

I am an active member of the Council for Exceptional Children on the national level. I review higher education programs for NCATE/CEC accreditation, am a member of the Paraeducator Special Interest Group, and have given numerous presentations at CEC national conventions.

I would like to further serve students with disabilities and would value continuing to collaborate with members of Minnesota CEC. I am committed to conducting my life with connection, compassion, and integrity. I believe Minnesota CEC has a critical role in serving students with disabilities, especially at this time of change and challenge.

# MNCEC Board of Directors Election Candidates

Continued from page 3



## Director Vote for 9

### Nancy Dumke

I am the Disability Resource Center Coordinator at Winona State University. We are based in the Advising and Retention Department, so our goal is to help students stay in college. Currently, students with disabilities are retaining at WSU at the rate of 83%, higher than the non-disabled population. This is my thirteenth year coordinating the center where 30 % of our students have learning disabilities, 20% have attentional disabilities and 18% have psychological/psychiatric disabilities. I previously coordinated the GOALS program (Goal Oriented Academic Learning Services) for underprepared students at WSU.

Prior to working at Winona State, I earned my master's degree in Administration from the University of Notre Dame. My undergraduate degree was in Physical Education, Health Studies, and coaching from St. Olaf College. I worked in Admissions there for ten years.

Interest in our profession has a personal basis. My college age daughter was diagnosed with dyslexia for the first time last year. She is a representative for the city of Winona this year and her platform is called, "Your disABILITY is your gift", a disability awareness program for elementary age students.

### Lin Funk

I was a High School Librarian when my 2nd grade daughter was diagnosed with a learning disability. In order to fully understand, support and advocate for my child, I made a career change and entered the Master's program for Special Education at Winona State University. Fourteen years later, I have licenses in Learning Disabilities, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, and Mild to Moderate Mental Handicaps, along with a master's degree in Special Education.

I have been employed by three school districts in SE Minnesota, and worked with students in all three areas of my licensure. Currently I work with learning disabled students at Plainview Elementary School. I also mentor new special education teachers, am a member of the CIMP team, the Continuing Education Relicensure Committee and am our district's Health Care Advocate.

I feel a special connection with the parents I work with, having also raised a child with a learning disability. It gives me great pleasure to share my daughter's success story and encourage them for the journey ahead.

### Bryce Fornes-Bates

Bryce Fornes-Bates graduated from MN State University-Moorhead in 2001 with a BA in special education. She is in her fourth year of teaching in St. Paul, Minnesota. Bryce became a member of the MNCEC board in 2002. She is serving her second year as a member of the Conference Planning Committee and she is the current MNCEC Children's Action Network (CAN) Committee Chair.

### Steven Kaatz

Dr. Steven Kaatz teaches in the graduate special education program at Bethel University in St. Paul. He has nearly 30 years of experience in both special and regular education. Steve has taught in elementary, middle and high schools as well as the college level in Asia and several American states. His experience includes rural, urban, and suburban schools.



### Gary Lewis

Gary currently works as Director of Student Services with Northfield Public Schools. Prior to this he worked as a Director of the River Bend Ed District in New Ulm, as a Special Education Supervisor in Iowa, as a School Psychologist in Winona, MN and with the Dept. of Defense Schools in Germany, and was a School Counselor in WI. He has a Doctorate in Special Education Administration from the Univ. of Northern Colorado, is Immediate Past President of the MN Administrators for Special Education, and has been a member of the MN CEC Board since 2002.

### Carol Long

*See candidate statement under "Representative Assembly" position on page 3"*

### Mary Z. McGrath

Mary Z. McGrath has served as Membership chair for the past two years. She has also served as State CCBD treasurer and secretary as well as national CCBD secretary. Mary taught special education for the Bloomington Public Schools. No longer working full-time, Mary works as a speaker, author and IEP consultant.

### David Nelson

My background in education and training encompasses about 15 years. My undergraduate degree is in Elementary Education from Northwestern in St. Paul, MN. I worked with grades K-6 as a classroom teacher, physical education teacher and computer education teacher from 1990 until 1998. During this time I also coached basketball, volleyball,

*Continued on next page*

## MNCEC Director Candidates

*Continued from previous page*

track and field and tennis at the Junior High level from 1994 until 1998. Most of these experiences were in Houston, Texas.

In 1998 I completed my Master's in Educational Administration from the University of Houston, TX. My wife and I moved back to St. Paul, MN in 1998 at which time I accepted a position with RPS/FedEx as a Technical Consultant/Trainer. I worked for RPS/FedEx from 1998 until 2000 at which time I went to work for a computer software company called CES. I worked with CES from 2000 until 2002. Both of these opportunities gave me a variety of experiences that I feel play a major role in how I work with children, parents and colleagues. It was during this time that I realized how much I missed working with young people.

In the Spring of 2002 I was accepted into a Master's Program for Special Education at Bethel University in Roseville, MN. I also accepted a teaching position in Special Education at Crosswinds Middle School in Woodbury, MN working with grades 6 through 8. I have taught since 2002 under a variance but have recently completed my Special Education licensure in EBD and SLD. I am licensed in this area by the state of Minnesota along with my Elementary license. This is my third year at Crosswinds and I thoroughly enjoy the work I do with children in this area.

I appreciate this opportunity to continue to learn and grow in this field. Thank you for your consideration.

### **Mary Ellen Wade**

Having been a member of CEC for 14 years and a MNCEC Board member for the past 3 years, I'm convinced that this organization is one of the most excellent resources available to educators. Twelve of my sixteen years of teaching have been with students with special needs, K-8. I am currently working as a special educator at Jedlicka Middle School in Proctor, Minnesota.

My teaching career began in 1968 in Chicago where I taught thirty-three first graders (including many with disabilities) in a very small room! This experience led me to look for better ways to address the needs of students who struggle. I went on to earn a masters degree in special education and have since worked with students with autism, asperger's syndrome, learning disabilities, cognitive impairments due to traumatic brain injury and fetal alcohol syndrome, among others.

I believe that CEC is an organization which is dedicated to improving the practices and resources of those who work with and on behalf of those with exceptionalities and it would be a privilege to continue to serve on the MNCEC Board.

**Your postcard ballot is included with this newsletter. Deadline to vote is February 11.**



## Federal Government Websites

- Federal Government – A portal to the Federal Government.  
[www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)
- White House – This is the official website for the White House and the executive branch of the Federal government.  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – The OMB aides in preparing the President's annual budget as well as performs other important budget related activities.  
[www.whitehouse.gov/omb/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/)
- General Accountability Office (GAO) – The GAO is Congress' non-partisan investigatory arm. The website provides access to GAO reports.  
[www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)
- Federal Elections Commission (FEC) – The website provides Federal election related information.  
[www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)

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# Bridging the Gap: Communication between a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public School and Families of Different Cultures

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By Lauren Murphy, Student, Winona State University



As a teacher in a public school, you will come in contact with people of different cultures. In fact, some of them might be your students and their families. It is important to be able to communicate to them effectively, even though you may not understand each other or see eye to eye. As a teacher it is your responsibility to find ways to connect to your students and their families, so that everyone can achieve success.


There are five main ways in which you can bridge the communication gap:

- **Home Visits.** When you are attempting to make a connection with a person, it is extremely important to meet them where they are at. For some people, such as the Amish, it might be hard for them to leave their home and get to school, due to transportation issues. Going to someone's home can show a lot of effort on your part and hopefully help open up communication more. If it is possible, it is also an option to hold meetings, such as IEP meetings, at the family's home if they can't get to school.
- **Doctor Visits.** It may seem a little far fetched, but attending doctor appointments for a student of yours might be very helpful for the student's family and also aid in communication. For example, Spanish speaking families might have a hard time communicating with the doctor, but as a "family representative" you can help have their needs and concerns addressed. It is important that you are informed about your students' medical conditions, especially if they are severe.
- **Home to School Notebook.** A communication log that goes back and forth from school to home can be a powerful tool. You will be able to share what is going on in your student's life at school and the family will be able to share with you what is going on at home. Concerns and questions can be addressed on both sides. Some families may not have a phone or any other way of communicating with you or the school, so a communication log may be a life line for your student, his/her family, and you.
- **Open the Doors of Your Classroom.** Giving the family an open invitation to visit your classroom can be another way to facilitate communication. Welcoming the family into your classroom is illustrating that you are open to having them come into your environment and observe the day to day operations. Showing hospitality will open up communication lines, because they know you are willing to open yourself up to them and therefore their questions, comments, or concerns.
- **Everyday Contact.** While all these strategies are great ways for you to open communication lines, there may be a line that is there that hasn't been tapped into yet. Examine your student's day and recognize if there is someone who interacts with the family on a daily basis, such as the bus driver. Those school personnel are the easiest and quickest way to give a "face" to the school. They play a pivotal role in communication, because they can deliver messages, observe day to day happenings, and simply just be a human point of contact for the family. Don't underestimate their opportunity to aid in communication.

This list is in no way conclusive. It is merely a few ideas to aid you in the quest to bridge the communication gap. It is of utmost importance and in fact your responsibility as a teacher to effectively communicate with your students' families, regardless of culture.



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## The Wait is Over!! IDEA Reauthorized: Mixes Positive Measures with Lack of Funding

During its lame duck session Congress passed the reauthorization bill for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and President Bush has signed into it into law. Some of CEC's recommendations that have been incorporated into the new IDEA include:

- Ensuring students with disabilities are included in accountability systems.
- Reducing the special education paperwork burden by deleting short-term objectives and benchmarks from IEPs (except for students who take alternate assessments), initiating a 15-state paperwork demonstration project, and piloting the three-year IEP.
- Establishing methods to reduce the number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are inappropriately placed in special education.
- Ensuring the discipline provisions for students with disabilities continue to protect the rights of these students to a free, appropriate public education.
- Providing funding for professional development for special educators.

“The new IDEA offers many positive measures to improve the education of children with disabilities,” says CEC President Suzanne Martin. “However, CEC is disappointed in the highly qualified provisions, which do a disservice to special education teachers, and the lack of full funding. Once again, students with disabilities are being shortchanged.”

The highly qualified provisions fail to recognize the multiple roles special education teachers fill in our schools and the complexity of the students these teachers serve. CEC is further disappointed that the federal government continues to refuse to meet its obligation to provide 40 percent of the excess cost of educating students with disabilities. Congress reneged on its promise in the new IDEA Reauthorization for special education funding. Congress appropriated \$1.7 billion less than approved in IDEA and \$481 million less than President Bush requested for special education.

To learn more about the new law go to the national CEC website:  
[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org).

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### CCBD News

by Lonna Moline



Three networking events are scheduled for this school year. The first is tentatively set in Perham, for January 22<sup>nd</sup>, another will be at the Special Education Pre-Conference in Duluth February 23, and the third in the southwestern metro area May 12th. Visit the website for the latest information: [www.mnccbd.org](http://www.mnccbd.org).

MNCCBD is currently looking for members to become involved with committees and board positions. If you are interested in sharing your time and talents, please contact Lonna Moline at [moline1@district112.org](mailto:moline1@district112.org) or 952.556.6357. We will make a place for you!

## MNCEC CAN Update: A Legislative Platform

By: Bryce Fornes-Bates

After our testimony last spring at the state capital, it was apparent that MNCEC was moving in more of a political direction than we had been in the recent past. The issue was discussed at our September board meeting. After much discussion, the MNCEC board made it a goal for our CAN committee to draft, publish and follow through with a legislative platform this year.

In the current political climate, it was felt that we should stand up and advocate for policy at the state level, which will benefit special education professionals. As a result, the CAN committee has constructed a concise set of policy statements that we will distribute to our membership and the MN Legislature this winter. Our platform includes issues that are important to all special education professionals.

This year the CAN committee chose three policy areas that we felt were the most important and pressing issues in special education at this time. The first issue is education funding. The second issue to address is statewide accountability testing and the use of value added assessments. The third issue we decided to address in this year's platform is the recruitment and retention of special education professionals.

You should have received your copy of the MNCEC 2005 legislative platform. Read it and pass the extra one onto your legislator!

## **GEOMETRY: An 8-10 Week Math Curriculum For 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – Middle School Students**

### **An Interview with teacher and author, Wendy Pellant**

by Claudine Knoblauch, MCEC Past President and  
Director of Special Education Services at Designs for Learning

Math does not speak to me, it never has. So when I had the opportunity to interview Wendy Pellant, a Minnesota teacher and author of a new geometry math program, I was a bit intimidated.

Once I met Wendy and we began our interview I quickly realized I had no reason to worry. Wendy approached the interview just as she does in her writing of her math programs:

1. emphasis on what you already know
2. have fun
3. reduce math anxiety
4. success is key
5. there are multiple ways to understand and learn
6. celebration of personal best

Wendy spoke about her new book that she is self-publishing, with great passion and excitement. Everything in the curriculum is based on personal teaching experience with a strong foundation in current brain –based research. Wendy also explained that she built the program incorporating multiple intelligence theory. She described her math curriculums as teacher- and student-user friendly, “by a teacher, for a teacher” format.

Wendy’s plan is to create curriculum that can be used in an all inclusive approach. She knows from personal experience as a teacher, the hands-on, differentiated approaches work in order to achieve student success for a wide range of learners.

Her book incorporates sequential lessons; pre-testing data gathering; center-based activities; hand-on activities; technical notes; student notes; practice pages; directed practices; daily reviews; and quizzes. Each lesson builds on “chunking” that requires constant review of previous skills learned to capture mastery. She pointed out that the students have multiple chances to show mastery, with multiple ways to look at the concepts presented. The goal is to move from abstract to concrete understanding and functional use of math concepts in real life applications.

This is the first of five mathematics curriculum books that Wendy’s company “Cranium Connections” will publish. To learn more or to order “Geometry” a complete geometry math curriculum, you can contact Wendy Pellant at christophermark@pellant.com.

## **Education Minnesota eMentoring Project Supports New Teachers**

*A message from MNCEC  
President-Elect and National  
Board Certified Teacher, Larry  
Iwen:*

Are you a new teacher who would like some help or support? Or are you an experienced teacher who would like to help your colleagues in their first years in the classroom? Get involved in Education Minnesota’s eMentoring Project, an Internet-based program that provides teaching ideas and collegial support for first-year teachers.

The program pairs National Board Certified and other experienced teachers with first year teachers. This could be a wonderful opportunity for special education teachers in smaller districts that have very few special education staff members.

Teachers who want mentors and teachers who are interested in being mentors should visit the eMentoring area of the Education Minnesota online community at [www.educationminnesota.org](http://www.educationminnesota.org).

For more information email Louise Covert at [louise.covert@educationminnesota.org](mailto:louise.covert@educationminnesota.org). She can also be reached by phone at 877-283-2241.

## **In Memorium**

As we all know, former Minnesota Governor Elmer L. Andersen, a moderate Republican who once was called “the ultimate Minnesotan,” died November 15 at age 95. What you may not know is that as a state senator, he was the father of a bill requiring schools to offer course work to children with special learning needs. He later said he considered that “the most important thing I ever worked on” as an elected official. We honor the legacy he has left behind for us all.

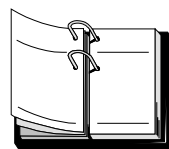
## What is the “Star Reporter?”

By Kristi Schons and Rebecca Kemp, Students  
Winona State University

At LaCrescent Public School the Developmentally Cognitively Delayed (DCD) programs are implementing a new curriculum, “Star Reporter.” This curriculum was introduced and is supported by Region 10 in Rochester. The program is designed so that each student can learn, participate, and communicate regardless of their disability. One of the core beliefs is that “If a student is not taught they will never learn!” The curriculum provides solutions for students with significant disabilities through effective teaching and learning within real-life contexts. Students are provided with appropriate and varied instructional methods. Through the use of assistive technology, even students with the most significant disabilities can participate in functional activities by activating a switch. Daily opportunities for communication create greater chances for participation, social closeness, and inclusion of students with disabilities in a variety of settings. The curriculum

*continued on page 11*

## Calendar of Events



### 2005 MNCEC/MNCCBD Conference

February 23-25

Duluth Entertainment and Conference Center, Duluth, Minnesota

Check Winter MNCEC newsletter for details or go to [www.mncec.org](http://www.mncec.org)

### Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

February 24 at MNCEC/MNCCBD Conference- 4:00 p.m.

Duluth Entertainment and Conference Center, Duluth, Minnesota

### CEC Annual Convention and Expo

April 6-9, Baltimore, Maryland

888-232-7733, [conteduc@cec.sped.org](mailto:conteduc@cec.sped.org), [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

### MASE/MASA conference is April 21-22<sup>nd</sup>

### National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals Conference

April 21-23, Salt Lake City, Utah, [www.nrpara.org](http://www.nrpara.org)

### Minnesota State Paraprofessional Conference

April 29-30

### MNCCBD Networking Event

May 12th, Southwest Metro area

Contact Lonna Moline 952-556-6357 or [www.mnccbd.org](http://www.mnccbd.org)

### Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

May 14 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

New Brighton Family Service Center, New Brighton, Minnesota

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## Announcing An Early Childhood Workshop!

Minnesota Council of Exceptional Children-Division of Early Childhood

*Putting the Pieces Together for the Whole Child*

March 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Minneapolis Airport Marriott

For more info email: [Jane.Roundtree@anoka.k12.mn.us](mailto:Jane.Roundtree@anoka.k12.mn.us)

## Minnesota School Health Education Conference

The 25th Annual Minnesota School Health Education conference, “Teaching and Learning: Health Literacy for All Learners” will be Feb. 7- 8 at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel (formerly the Radisson Hotel South).

A strand of sessions is being planned to provide Special Education, ELL teachers and health educators with effective teaching, learning, and collaborative strategies to increase the achievement and success of K-12 special education students.

Visit the conference web site at <http://bemidjistate.edu/conferences/mnhealthconf>.

For registration information contact John Rohwer at 651.638.6391 or email him [a-j-rohwer@bethel.edu](mailto:a-j-rohwer@bethel.edu).

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## Editor’s Message

*Continued from page 12*

valley and with the assistance of the community reformed their lives and carried on. He once told me, “To help someone, that’s good.”

Now, in his retirement, he fishes, reads, works in his wood shop and, as he has done all his life, takes life as it comes. We gently swayed in his porch swing and he told me he is without an education. At the age of 12, in the 1930s, he quit school to work on his father’s farm. His eyes misted for just a moment and his voice broke just a little as he told me, “Life is hard without an education.”

The understatement of that single sentence overwhelms me.

## Intentional Inviting

By: **Steven A. Kaatz Ph.D.**  
**MNCEC Board Member**  
**Professor at Bethel University**



The following ritual is repeated at Gilman School football team meetings.

Coaches: What's our job?

Players: To love us.

Coaches: What's your job?

Players: To love each other

The above exchange is recorded in *Seasons of Life* (2004) by Jeffrey Marx, a Pulitzer Prize winning author. Gilman football, played in Maryland, is an antidote for high school football in west Texas as described in the book and new motion picture, *Friday Night Lights*.

The Gilman coaches practice what Purkey and Novak (1984) call intentional inviting. It informs students that they are "... responsible, able, and valuable."

Intentional inviting ideas for special education classrooms include the following.

1. Greet students at the door as they arrive, let them know that they are safe and that they are welcome. School can be a very scary, unsafe and unwelcoming place for students with disabilities.
2. Inquire about students' interests (even if you do not share them).
3. Grab free publications about cars and trucks for sale at the supermarket. Ask your librarian for books, and magazines relating to students' interests. This is a subtle way to encourage reading.
4. Keep current local /suburban newspapers on hand. Use them to connect with students' towns / suburbs / neighborhoods
5. Bring in free newspapers, magazines reflecting student diversity such as *Korean Quarterly*, *Asian American Press* and *Native American Press*.
6. Keep a jigsaw puzzle in progress on a table. It can be a great conversation starter and give a sense of accomplishment.
7. At the beginning of class allow students to give titles to simple but ambiguous drawings called Doodles (Price, 2000). "Word drawings" called Wuzzles (Underwood, 1999) can also be used. (Wuzzles are featured in some daily papers).
8. Every two or three weeks make a "posi" call or e-mail to parents, telling them something positive their son or daughter did recently.
9. Transitions, especially to middle or high school, can be scary for students in special education. Help your students make a welcome book for next fall's new students. You might title it something like Everything you wanted to know about Mosquito High but were afraid to ask.

## What YOU can do to Influence Public Policy

- Know your delegation.
- Know the legislative agenda.
- Know something about your delegation's role (what committees they are on; their background; what university they attended).
- Make an appointment to meet with a legislative aide.
- At the meeting provide the right information (include a personal story).
- Become a resource; find out what information they need and help them find it.
- Invite the staff person or the Legislative Member to visit your school, speak to a class.
- Be very clear about key issues. Do not leave without making a request.
- Thank the staffer or the Legislative Member for funded projects, support, and/or hard work.
- If further information is requested FAX or email. Do not use snail mail.
- Create a coalition; find third party endorsements.
- Follow up, follow up, follow up—stay informed (follow legislative progress, check websites).
- Communicate about specific legislative provisions as they become timely, for example appropriations every year.

Adapted from *Ten Things YOU can do to Influence Public Policy* by Jane West, Washington Partners, LLC; presented at the 2005 CEC Teacher Education Division Conference.

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## The Star Reporter

*continued from page 9*

lum may be used for the whole day or implemented throughout the day as appropriate. The teachers at LaCrescent have decided to dedicate one hour a day toward this program.

One of the goals of this program is to report to our readers about the activities that students have participated in during a particular month. This helps to explain the significance of the curriculum's name, "The Star Reporter". Each student becomes a Star Reporter who basically collects information for articles that will be submitted to the newspaper. Each month the students vote on the subject matter that they want to investigate. Then the students interview peers, teachers, secretaries, cooks, custodians, and even the principal to gather information about the selected topic. The students wear a "Star Reporter" badge that designates them as an official reporter.

The curriculum is age appropriate. For example, September's theme was favorite hobby. The students

choose swinging, dancing, cards, and basketball. After developing the choices the students voted and tallied the results. The Star Reporters then proceeded to interview school staff and students as to what their favorite hobby

was. Before the students interviewed other people they were taught how to introduce themselves and tell the interviewee what their favorite hobby was. The October's theme was Caves and Volcanoes. The elementary focused on care of caves, while the high school level focused on stalagmites and stalactites.

As student teachers our experience with the "Star Reporter" has been very positive.

This curriculum is multidisciplinary, as the content areas addressed are math, reading, writing and science. The lesson plans integrate general education standards and functional areas addressed in students Individual Educational Plans. The students benefit by learning social skills, experiencing a sense of belonging, and being able to produce a finished product that they can see and be proud of. As student teachers we would highly recommend looking into the "Star Reporter" for any classroom!



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## A Well Kept Secret of Interest to Teacher-Paraprofessional Pairs

by Mary Z. McGrath, Membership Chair

When you think of pairs perhaps you think of the antique salt and pepper shakers used at the last family holiday gathering or maybe your aunt and uncle, married 67 years, exemplifies a pair par excellence to you.

Another pair worthy of note is that of the special education teacher and paraprofessional. This team works closely together and brings mutual benefit to one another on the job on a regular basis. The teacher- paraprofessional pair grows in effectiveness and communication by association.

We become like those with whom we associate and both teachers and paraprofessionals learn from one another and grow due to the individual growth of each.

One way that a CEC member special education teacher can strengthen this already effective pairing is perhaps a well kept secret. Are you aware that the paraprofessionals

in your school can join CEC at a lesser rate and gain many of the membership benefits that you have?

By getting an Associate Membership a new world will open to the paraprofessional with whom you most associate. According to the CEC web site ([www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)) "Associate membership is for parents and family members who do not work full-time in the field of education, and paraprofessionals. Associate members receive all the benefits of Professional membership except the Exceptional Children journal, CEC Today newsletter, and voting status."

Bring this article to your next team meeting. Suggest that the paraprofessional with whom you associate learn about this well kept secret in order to gain the benefits of CEC Associate membership.

**Inside: MNCEC  
Board of Directors  
Election Ballot &  
State Conference  
Information**



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**Letter**  
from the **Editor**

by Carol Long



Education has been a significant component of my life about as far back as I can remember. I was a student for over 20 years and have been a teacher and professor for more than 25. Sometimes that kind of familiarity causes me to take things for granted. Recently two people brought to light some things about education I have always known but not previously appreciated.

As I write this, one of my graduate advisees is in the final stages of her professional paper. For her study she worked with a student who has developmental cognitive disability, speech and language impairment, and attention deficit disorder. She taught him to recognize sound-symbol relationships and beginning blending, something that in his previous nine years in school had not been accomplished. Her study is one of transformation, realizing potential, and the effect of hard work, expertise, and dedication. This fifteen-year-old student, at the beginning

of the study a non-reader, now holds his head a little higher and thinks of himself in a new, positive way.

My advisee used her prep-period for an entire school year to work with this student. She had the courage and the commitment to try a reading program in a novel way and it worked. Progress was agonizingly slow and there were times both wanted to quit, but change occurred and success was measured.

She is writing her fifth chapter that outlines her findings.

She is adamant that the implications of her research are that all students can learn, that this technique be tried with all non-readers, that we cannot give up. Education is too important and for this student that meant reading. We cannot give up. We cannot deny what is so essential.

***“Life is hard  
without an  
education***

...

***To help someone,  
that’s good.”***

One evening last summer, I visited with my next-door neighbor. He is a wise, elderly gentleman, nearly eighty, who has experienced life’s

ups and downs. He worked hard, raised a large family, and polka-ed every Saturday night. Back in the 1980s, he and his wife lost their home when a flood devastated our