

Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children

Newsletter

Vol. 16, No. 3

May 2005

**Do you want more
up-to-date
information on
what's happening
with MNCEC and
Special Education?**

*If so, help us set up a
MNCEC membership
email list! (Details on p. 11)
Send your email address to
mncec_can@earthlink.net.
Thank you!*



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BRAINStorming Conference Deemed a Success!

By: Larry Iwen, MNCEC President Elect/2005 Conference Chair

The 2005 MNCEC/CCBD Conference is now behind us and, based on the attendee feedback, it can be deemed a huge success! Featuring three dynamic and diverse keynotes, 36 breakout sessions, disability grouped networking sessions, and the annual awards luncheon, the 2005 conference earned a lot of praise and positive comments!

Keynoter Marilee Sprenger was an overwhelming favorite. All keynoters offered interesting and diverse perspectives on the field of special education that gave many people ideas to reflect upon. We would love to hear your suggestions for future keynotes for our future conferences!

Over 400 attendees were treated to a wide variety of breakout sessions that offered something for everyone including a strand on Autism and topics covering best practice, current research trends, assessment and accountability, inclusive special education practices, NCLB updates, and brain based learning - just to name a few. Our experiment of adding networking sessions was also very popular and is an idea we will certainly consider continuing.



A summary of the more than 230 evaluations is available on our web page at www.mncec.org in pdf format. Click on the "Conference Feedback" link to access it. The summary includes written comments about the keynotes, the facility, and the overall impressions of the conference as well as comments about the networking sessions. Feedback and comments about individual breakout sessions will not be available online out of respect and courtesy to the presenters. For more information regarding the conference planning process and responses to frequently asked questions about this year's conference, be sure to check out the "Conference Q & A" link also in the conference feedback area of our web page.

On behalf of the 2005 Conference Planning Committee and the entire MNCEC/CCBD Board of Directors, I would like to extend a huge THANK YOU to all of you who were part of the 2005 conference as well as to those of you that supplied us with feedback. Your comments ARE important and will help us plan the 2006 conference to make it the best one yet!



Letter from the President

by Melissa Schaller

Late last summer I moved to the southeastern region of the state. Even as a native of the state, since my move I have a new appreciation for the variety of weather we face in Minnesota. Recently there was record snowfall and not two weeks later, a tornado warning. Despite the vast extremes, spring is here. As educators the warm weather serves to renew us and give us the necessary energy that we need to do the good work that needs to be done.

I expect at this time of year in the world of education, things should begin to wind down, however, I am finding that things are really gearing up. Many of you are planning for extended school year, considering plans for the 05-06 school year and trying to conclude the 04-05 school year. Students need to register for next year, plans for transitions to new grades and new schools need to be made, preparations need to occur for graduation and there are a variety of other things that will need to be orchestrated to conclude the school year.

With all of that and the day to day educational tasks we face, it remains essential that we are well informed about developments in school funding as well as the work being done to define and implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. All of this together sounds like a daunting, overwhelming task. Remembering the reasons we work as educators – to provide education to students with disabilities as is their right – makes everything seem manageable.

Now, I will be turning over the reins soon to our new president, Larry Iwen. I appreciate the opportunities I have had as the president of the Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children. It has been a great experience.

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 MNCEC Board of Directors

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 UM-Duluth
 Steven Kaatz, Bethel
 David Rogers, St. Cloud State
 Linda Svobodny, MN State
 Moorhead

Website: www.mncec.org



Thank you, Melissa, for your service as MNCEC President!

News from the National CEC Convention Representative Assembly Report

By Carol Long, Representative Assembly Delegate



Representative Assembly discussed imperative issues regarding IDEA 2004 regulations and funding and the elimination of national Gifted and Talented, Assistive Technology, and Vocational-Technical Programs.

First, IDEA was 2004 was signed into law by President Bush on December 2, 2004. The Department of Education is expected to issue regulations for the law in May 2005. The field will have 75 days to comment on the proposed regulations. After hearings held across the nation this summer the proposed regulations will be rewritten with final regulations by the end of 2005. CEC's recommendations can be found at www.cec.sped.org/pdfs/IDEAREgs022805.pdf and www.cec.sped.org/pdfs/APPENDIX2004LDRoundtableRecs.pdf

Second, President Bush's 2006 proposed budget calls for a \$508 million increase for IDEA. However, this does not equal the \$14.6 billion authorized by Congress under the new IDEA (Current funding is only at 18.6 percent. Full funding at the federal level is considered to be 40 percent of national average per special education pupil expenditure). CEC is continuing to campaign for fully funding IDEA by advocating that Congress and the Bush Administration pass appropriations legislation this year that guarantees full funding within six years, or no later than fiscal year 2011. For FY 2006, CEC is recommending a total federal annual appropriation for IDEA of \$17.24 billion, which includes increased appropriations for IDEA Part B Grants to States Program and Preschool Grants Program, and the Part C Infants and Toddlers Program and Part D support programs.

Third, President Bush's proposed 2006 budget eliminates funding for the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Program, the Assistive Technology Program, and Career and Technical Education through the Carl Perkins Act.

Presently only one-half of gifted learners receive education appropriate to their needs, and traditional education programs do not sufficiently address the needs of this group. Elimination of funding for gifted and talented program would further decrease this number. CEC recommends that Congress appropriate \$20 million for the Jacob Javits Act.

The Assistive Technology Program provides funding to states to develop programs that ensure that anyone can have access to assistive technology devices and services. Without this funding many children with disabilities are at a disadvantage when they cannot access or use devices that lead to productive, independent lives and achieve in the classroom. CEC recommends that Congress appropriate \$29.8 million for the Assistive Technology Act.

The 2006 proposed budget eliminates federal investment in career technical education and redirects these funds to a new \$1.5 billion high school block grant. Career technical education students see learning as relevant, are more likely to finish high school, pursue additional education, and succeed in the workforce. CEC recommends that Congress appropriate \$1.6 billion for the Perkins Act.



Federal Government Websites

- Federal Government – A portal to the Federal Government.
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
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – The OMB aids in preparing the President's annual budget as well as performs other important budget related activities.
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
- Federal Elections Commission (FEC) – The website provides Federal election related information.
www.fec.gov

Book Review

Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future

by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern.

Book Review by Mark Krug, MNCEC Secretary

“Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future” by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern. National Educational Service, 1990.

With one of the keynoters at the 2005 Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference was Larry Brendtro and I thought it might be worthwhile to review his seminal work “Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future.” (Note: The 1990 edition is reviewed for this article, an updated version has been written with similar content.)

For those seeking a resource for creating an educational philosophy that is positive and relationship based, this work can be a strong foundation. Combining a psychology and special education with Native American philosophies and traditions, the authors make a sound argument for implementing strategies and interventions designed to create a sense of community and belonging.

The text is a relatively quick read (weighing in at less than 125 pages) and is divided into three sections, each with a strong empirical/research base. Part I provides short vignettes of “The Seeds of Discouragement”, the authors’ descriptions of conditions that create an environment or expectation that is negative. The ‘seeds’ as defined are destructive relationships, climates that breed futility, learned irresponsibility, and a loss of purpose. Anecdotal situations are presented that are then tied to professional observation and research.

In contrast to the “Seeds of Destruction”, the authors outline a model for creating hope, generating relationships, and in providing a basis for meaningful lives: The Circle of Courage. Utilizing Native American culture symbolism, the circle embodies belonging, mastery of skills, independence and generosity. While acknowledging the cultural aspects of the circle, the authors provide bridging links (for traditional western thinkers) to recognized and generally accepted concepts of self esteem: significance, competence, power and virtue. Additionally, the Circle represents another way to look



at conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments. Within the context of the Circle, the authors espouse the need to look beneath the surface (of the behavior) and identify the deeper relationships and meanings of the behavior.

Part III attempts to tie the philosophy of the Circle to professional practice. Relationship building, brain-friendly learning, and discipline are all highlighted. This is perhaps the weakest part of the argument for incorporating the Circle into daily practice. While much theory is presented, the text lacks a practitioner oriented focus and there is little in the way of hands-on practical interventions or strategies. The arguments and rationale presented are excellent food for thought and can lead to deeper ponderings in developing one’s personal philosophy, but the lack of concrete examples for implementation may frustrate some. At the same time, the philosophy espoused is applicable across all disabilities, not just students with maladaptive behaviors. The need for belonging, mastery of skills, independence and generosity are universal.

Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern. was published by the National Educational Service, 1990.



National CEC Financial Status

Editor’s note: This is taken from a memo written by Stan Dublinske, CEC Treasurer, to the Representative Assembly

At the end of 2003, national CEC had \$5,555,720 in assets and total liabilities of \$5,254,540. At that time, CEC had net assets of \$301,180 and enough assets to pay off all its liabilities and still have funds available. The national Board of Directors, the Finance and Audit Committee, and the national CEC staff have implemented practices that will provide information on a monthly basis related to financial status of CEC. As a result of enhanced revenue and reduced expenses in the past two years, CEC had revenue that exceeded expenses by more than \$75,000.

National CEC has gone through a difficult period financially but is emerging strong and here to stay!

Special Education Conference Wrap-up . . .

Minnesota CEC / CCBD's
2005 Special Education Conference



Networking Session Gives Voice to Concerns

By Jim Smith, MNCEC Board Member

MNCEC Board members offered breakout sessions at the MNCEC & CCBD's 2005 Special Education Conference. These sessions were designed to foster open discussion and increase networking and brainstorming with colleagues that work in similar disability areas.

During one session board members met with more than 25 SLD and EBD teachers to discuss issues and share resources. The teachers were from a variety of settings and grade levels. Strengths and achievements were discussed along with areas of concern. Meeting the needs of more students with an increase of high needs students with less resources topped the list of concerns. The impact of reduced out of district placements on resource rooms and building staff was also one of the concerns. Chemical health issues and Autism spectrum disorders are on the rise and add greatly to the demands and complications of meeting student needs.

Resources for skills based reading programs and models for reducing the use of resource room services were also discussed. The need for general education teachers to increase their understanding of mental health issues continues. Early intervention education for mainstream teachers received considerable discussion with a lot of concerns. Special education consulting in regards to pre-interventions in the mainstream is being added on top of the demands of special education teachers with already highly demanding caseloads.

As you can see, many concerns and questions surfaced during these sessions. Suggestions to address some concerns were shared and connections with resources were made. Of course, many concerns cannot be solved in a break out session. We will to continue to encourage discussions and search for resources.

. . . On To Next Year's Conference!

**February 15 - 17, 2006
Rochester Minnesota**

Look for the 2006 Special Awards nomination form in the Fall Newsletter. Who do you think should be the Special Teacher, the Special Yes I Can! Student, or the Special Person? Put your thinking caps on!

THANK YOU

to sponsors and exhibitors at the 2005 Special Education Conference! We couldn't have done it without you!

Gold Sponsors

AGS Publishing
4201 Woodland Road
Circle Pines, MN 55014
Brad Tesdahl
651-287-7703 / 651-287-7226 fax
www.agsnet.com
Publisher of assessments and special needs curriculum

SpEd Forms Inc.
P.O. Box 685
Pipestone, MN 56164
Shane Dennis
www.spedforms.com
IEP, IFSP and IIP software

Exhibitors

Allyn & Bacon
Capella University
Captioned Telephone Service
Computer Automated Systems, Inc.
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)
Greystone Educational Materials
Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children (MNCEC)
Public Consulting Group
Schoolhouse Connections
Steck-Vaughn/Harcourt Achieve
Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC)
The Joy of Stress Management
TIES – Technology so you can teach
Workable Assessments –
The one hour life plan



Minnesota Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders Award Winners

Awarded at the Special Educators' Conference

**Frank Wood
Award Winner
Deborah
Saxhaug**



**Bruce Balow
Award Winner
Heidi
Wilhelm**



**Sheldon Braaten Award, from left to right,
Karen Kozen, Char Ryan and Manuel Barrera**

Where Is She Now?

**An update on last year's Yes I Can award winner,
Joanna Swett**



Joanna completed all of her high school course work and participated in graduation ceremonies at St. Paul's Highland Park Senior High School where she graduated magna cum laud and was ranked 54th in a class of over 400 students. Because of the need for continued supports, she chose to remain on an IEP while attending college.

She is now in her second semester at St. Paul College working toward an associate degree in child development. Her dedication to schoolwork and many, many hours of homework have paid off. She earned an "A" in the two classes she took during the first semester and is maintaining an "A" in both of the classes she is taking this semester.

Last summer Joanna worked as a substitute aide in her church's child care center. Since September she had been working actively to find a job in a childcare center and was rewarded for her efforts when she recently became employed part-time at the Sand Castles Child Care Center in St. Paul.

Joanna's dream is to open a childcare center where children with disabilities and children without disabilities play and learn together.

Winners! Winners! Winners!

by Mary Z. McGrath,
Membership Chair

Congratulations to our Winners!

During our recent state conference held in Duluth, CEC hosted a membership booth. Among those who stopped by and registered for a prize are those whose names were selected. On Thursday the following attendees won prizes.

- Krista Fisher, Buffalo
- Nicole Miller, Minneapolis
- Pat Norman, Moorhead
- Anne Hollencamp, Maple Lake
- Tracy Weber, Rochester
- Kala Richards, Fergus Falls
- Todd Travis, Midwest Coop
- Karen Bakken, Thief River Falls
- Leslie Rogalla, Thief River Falls

On Friday there were some other fortunate winners as well. Unfortunately, their names are not available.

Congratulations to all who won prizes! Hooray for all those who attended the conference and grew from the experience. A BIG CONGRATULATIONS to our Minnesota CEC members for choosing to be part of an organization that supports your growth and provides networking opportunities for professionals who work with students with special needs.

Come back next year for more prizes, learning and growth!

SPECIAL Award Winners



Special Teacher

Holly Schmidt

Holly teaches students with autism in the Rosemount, Eagan Apply Valley School District. In addition to teaching she is a K-12 Autism Inclusion Specialist and has mentored nine other staff. Holly has gained the trust and respect of staff and families.

She has been involved with the MN State Autism Network since its inception. Also, she teaches classes in the Autism Certificate Program at Hamline University. Holly is a master teacher in every sense of the word and stands out as a treasure in our profession.

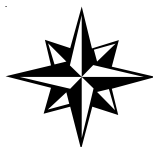
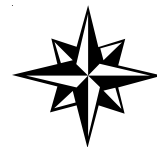


Special Yes! I Can Student of the year

David Ficks

David has become a success in the classroom and at his job. He previously struggled to meet the basic academic and school expectations. Often off task, he was defiant and had a difficult time getting along with others. For the past three years he has worked at a theater and has been promoted to a position where now he mentors other employees.

David volunteers at as an interpreter and has earned the highest level of his school's level system. He plans to attend technical college in the fall to become an electrician.



Special Person

Brad Tesdahl

Brad has been the MN representative for AGS Publishing Company since 1997. He travels to every part of the state presenting assessment tools and curriculum products to special educators.

Coming from a family of educators, Brad has a deep understanding of the needs of teachers and students and works to provide resources to enhance teaching. Through Brad, AGS has been a strong supporter of the MN Special Education conferences.



THANK YOU, LAVONNE!

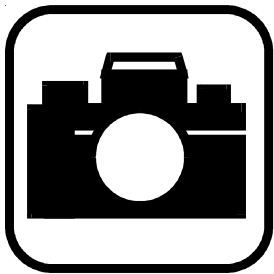
The MNCEC Board of Directors would like to extend a special THANK YOU to LaVonne See, Treasurer, who is stepping off the board. She has served on the MNCEC board for many years and as treasurer, she has kept a close eye on MNCEC finances. Good luck, LaVonne! We wish you the best.

Strategies Worth Trying!

The Effectiveness of a Digital Camera in the Classroom

By Jennifer Purrington, Student Winona State University

I have recently realized how beneficial and almost essential a digital camera can be for a class of students with developmental disabilities. Even the simplest digital camera can add excitement and increased educational interest in your classroom. In an age where computers rule the world and the special education field, using a digital camera in the classroom can be easy for any teacher to learn.



“One of the best things we’ve used digital cameras for is communication books and picture schedules,” said second-

ary special education teacher Teresa Lauden Caledonia. “It’s great to be able to take pictures of places that my students are actually going. It makes the transitions smoother and more realistic.”

Within my own student teaching experience, we are using a digital camera to create a newspaper made by the students. I am able to take pictures of all of our activities, check the pictures right away on the computer, and take more if they’re needed. There’s no hassle of developing and scanning the pictures into the computer.

Strategies for Effective Proofreading

By Krista L. Fisher, MNCEC Board Member
Learning Disabilities Specialist, Mound Westonka High School

In our district we use the “Six Traits Of Writing plus 1” throughout the curriculum when developing a writing assignment. The students are familiar with the writing process as presented in their elementary years. However, my students struggle with each trait. The Conventions trait, the proofreading step, is my student’s greatest downfall. After having worked through the first five traits, they are frustrated and exhausted. Before we begin proofreading, we take a break. I have found that setting the assignment aside for a couple of days is helpful. They return to it refreshed and ready to attack it again.

Recently, we practiced another strategy. While preparing my eleventh and twelfth grade students who have not yet passed the Minnesota Basic Standard Test in Writing, I came across some methods that kept them engaged and confident in their abilities.

I presented the information from the Minnesota Department of Education’s handbook found on their website, http://education.state.mn.us/html/intro_testing.htm. We began on page 4 and reviewed the steps they offered for outlining and preparing for the test. We discussed common errors and they were able to recognize the ones they make. We made a list on our white board of things to watch for such as missing suffixes (-ed, -s, homonyms etc.). Then using a sample that received a score of 2, which is not passing, we corrected it as a group. We took each sentence one at a time, reading it out loud. We handled it like our Daily Oral Language (DOL), exercise that we do each morning. The students enjoyed going through each sentence. One student said, “We felt very successful because we knew what we were doing, looking at each sentence carefully.”

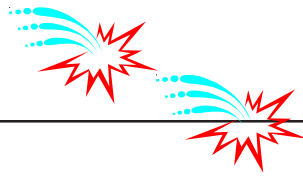
So, when proofreading, try these simple steps:

- Take a break.
- Form a group of peers.
- Make a list of common mistakes.
- Read each sentence out loud.
- Make the necessary corrections.



Another very helpful website is OWL Online Writing Lab posted by Purdue University at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_proof.html. They have more great strategies for proofreading including ways to slow down and personalize your proofreading so you can quickly catch your most common mistakes. Use these steps and websites to help your students become better proofreaders and more enthusiastic writers.

Student MNCEC



By Marilyn Hukriede, Student CEC Advisor

Wow! We had 16 students attend our state conference from Moorhead, St. Cloud and Winona. Fourteen of them are going to national convention in Baltimore. At our meeting, we elected a Student Governor, Amy Beckstrand, from St. Cloud State University. She will be participating in our MNCEC Board meetings. We shared with each other what kinds of things our different student chapters are involved in and there were lots of door prizes. We enjoyed meeting others from across the state and decided to set up a committee to plan for a pre-conference retreat in the fall. It was a pleasure to meet all of you and I look forward to working with you throughout the coming year.



*Amy Beckstrand
New Student CEC
President*

Top Seven Special Education Resources

By Keturah Evanson, Graduate Student at Winona State University and Special Education Teacher at Lewiston-Altura High School

When I first began teaching full-time in special education, my biggest dilemma was finding enough materials for the various needs of my students. I resourced the other special education teachers within my district to find out what they were using. Not surprisingly, these teachers had an abundance of resources that they were more than happy to let me borrow to see what would fit my students' needs.

So here is a list of my top seven special education resources that I have found to be the most practical and useful within my own special education classroom throughout the past year:

7. American Guidance Service

- <http://www.agsnet.com/>
- Resourceful textbooks and curriculum on numerous areas in special education: Careers, Math, Reading, Study Skills, Test Preparation, Work Skills and Transition.

6. Curriculum Associates

- <http://www.CurriculumAssociates.com>
- Quality curriculum that enables the teacher to diagnose, teach and assess in core areas.

5. PCI Educational Publishing

- <http://www.pcieducation.com>
- Many useful resources for students as well as teachers in special education. Has a variety of manipulatives that enhance reading, writing and math concepts.

continued on page 10

Are you a Highly Qualified Teacher?



continued from page 11

state of Minnesota meets the NCLB definition of a "highly qualified" teacher. This section also addresses those teaching on a variance, who may choose to use the HOUSS process as a way to become "highly qualified". Those teaching as a community expert or on a limited license must meet Minnesota education licensing requirements.

In summary, if you are a fully licensed special education teacher in the state of Minnesota, you are now "highly qualified" under the scope of federal and state education laws to continue doing your job.



Using Digital Cameras

continued from page 8

Students with developmental disabilities are usually very visually oriented, and thus my students really appreciate and value seeing themselves in the paper. It motivates them during the activities and gives them ownership of their projects. A student in my class stated, "It's fun to take pictures and see my picture in the paper."

All of the students get really excited when they receive the final paper and are able to show their parents, peers, and classmates the pictures of what they've been doing. In addition, it is a great way to visually show parents the activities we are doing in our classroom. Digital cameras can enhance your students learning. Please consider using one, even the simplest camera may liven up your lessons and your students' interest and understanding!

MNCEC Election Results

The election for officers and directors for the MNCEC Board took place in January and were announced at the MNCEC annual meeting held during the February conference in Duluth. Thanks to all MNCEC members who returned their ballots. The results are as follows:

Officers for 2005 – 2006:

President: Larry Iwen
President Elect: Jeanne Danneker
Secretary: Roberta Kaufman
Treasurer: Mark Krug
Representative Assembly: Carol Long



Re-Elected Directors at Large:

Bryce Fornes-Bates	Carol Long
Steven Kaatz	Mary Z. McGrath
Gary Lewis	Mary Ellen Wade

Newly Elected Board Members:

Nancy Dumke
Lin Funk
David Nelson

Congratulations to all!

Top Seven SPED Resources

continued from page 9

4. Educators Publishing Service, Inc.

- <http://www.epsbooks.com>
- Great reading (K-12) resources that start with the basics and builds up.

3. Jamestown Education

- <http://www.jamestowneducation.com>
- Fantastic reading series that incorporates effective reading strategies that help students become more independent as well as successful.

2. National Endowment for Financial Planning (NEFE) High School Financial Planning Program

- <http://www.nefe.org/hsfpportal/index.html>
- Free student handbooks, teacher guide and interactive website! Student interest level is high. This program is very applicable to real life daily living and goal setting in relation to financial planning.

1. Remedia

- <http://www.rempub.com/stores>
- Excellent resource for materials that are reproducible. Topics cover everything from math, reading, and writing to following directions, study skills and critical thinking. These materials are grade and interest level inventoried. They are also quite affordable and practical for most special education classrooms.

Calendar of Events



MASE Best Practices Conference

May 4-6

Kavanaugh's Conference Center, Brainerd, MN
www.mnase.org

PACER Center's 23rd Annual Benefit-Lionel Richie

May 7, Minneapolis Convention Center
952-838-900 www.pacer.org

MNCCBD Networking Event

May 12th, Southwest Metro area

Contact Lonna Moline 952-556-6357 or www.mnccbd.org

Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

May 14, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

New Brighton Family Service Center

20th Annual Conference of the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota

May 20 & 21, St. Cloud Civic Center

www.braininjurymn.org

Minnesota CEC Board Meeting (Open to Public)

September 10 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

New Brighton Family Service Center

MASE 2005 Fall Leadership Conference

October 12-14, Cragun's Resort, Brainerd, MN
www.mnase.org

Social Emotional Training for Paraprofessionals and Teachers

October 14, Mt. Iron-City Hall Community Room
MN Prevention Resource Center 763-427-5310 or
800-782-1878

DEC Conference Update

By Jane Roundtree, DEC Division Representative

The Division of Early Childhood Conference was held March 10-11th at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott. About 200 early childhood professionals attended. The most popular sessions were on methamphetamine abuse and its affect on children and families. Presenters were from the State Drug Task Force and the Department of Health. They provided great presentations for all age groups!!

DEC will sponsor the Annual Fall Leadership Conference, October 5th-7th at Rutgers in Brainerd. More registration and presentation information will be sent out over the summer. We look forward to returning to Rutgers.

The CAN Report

by Bryce Fornes-Bates, CAN Coordinator

*Help us set up a MNCEC membership email list!
Send your email address to
mncec_can@earthlink.net.
Thank you!*

Improved Communication With Our Membership

At the current time, the main format for communicating with the members of MNCEC is the newsletter published three times during the school year. While this is an excellent way of sharing information and news, it is difficult to share information that is more time-sensitive in nature.

In this digital age, our organization decided that it should move forward and create a system “for timely communication with our membership.” It is actually one of our annual goals for the MNCEC board this year. At the current time, the most efficient and timely way of communication is email. As we begin to develop this new communication tool, we first need actual email addresses of our members. Please submit your email address to mncec_can@earthlink.net.

MNCEC will not share nor distribute the information you provide to us.



Editor's Letter

Continued from page 12

quality of his life will be so much better simply because of that.”

I am in contact with one of my former graduate students. She has taught for almost ten years and is at the point where she is ready to make a professional step and looking at her options. Not long ago we had a conversation brainstorming what was possible—grant writing, becoming a special education director, publishing, teaching at a local university, taking a leadership role within her school. She is ready, excited, and so capable. I can hardly wait for her success story.

I have a story from my days in teaching special education at the junior high level. I often use this story when I work with paraeducators. One day I was called to the office to answer a phone call. This was before the days of phones in the rooms. On the intercom, the secretary said it was

Are You “Highly Qualified?”

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all of the teachers in America must be “highly qualified” to teach in the nation’s schools. As NCLB is a federal law, each state, including Minnesota, may determine what exactly “highly qualified” is.

There has been some confusion about what this means for special education teachers in our state. The latest developments of the “highly qualified” issue are contained in a document released in September of 2004 by the Minnesota Department of Education. The title of this document is Minnesota State Plan for “Highly Qualified” Teacher Requirements Information for Teachers and School Districts. (If you would like to know the details of this document, you can locate it on the department of education website www.education.state.mn.us.)

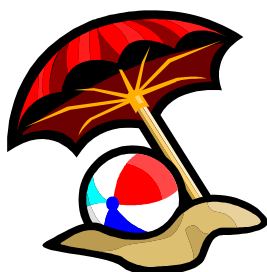
In the special education section of the document, it states that the language passed in the 2004 omnibus education bill specifies that any licensed special education teacher in the

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from a former student. As I walked down the hall, I prayed please don’t let him be asking for a reference. I had always liked this student but things certainly went smoother when he was absent. He had been in trouble with the juvenile authorities with poor grades and lots of problems. When I got to the phone, he asked if I was the same Carol Long who taught at the junior high when he was in school. I responded that I remembered him well. He went on to say that his name had been in the paper lately associated with some bad activities and he wanted me to know that it wasn’t him. It was a distant relative. He had pulled his life together, married, fathered a child, and was calling from work. He was in his second year of employment with this company. He ended our conversation by saying, “I just wanted you to know and if you know where Mrs. C is (the paraeducator who worked with me at that time), I’d like her to know, too.”

Stories like these are the priceless perks of our profession.

Happy Summer!



Letter from the Editor

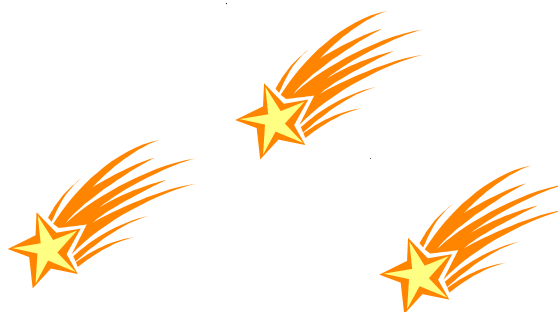
by Carol Long



I walked into class last week and one of my students was giving the bad news to her fellow classmates, “No boat, no cabin, no fancy vacations, no house with a pool...” A practicing teacher had just spoken in another of her classes. She was disappointed, even a little shocked, at the financial rewards of her chosen profession.

I was tempted to deliver one of my “when I was your age” perspectives and launch into a diatribe on four digit salaries, gender discrimination, and teaching in trailers, closets, and on the stage but decided to just let it be. She wasn’t talking about changing her major and she is at a stage when reality is starting to sink in and graduation is becoming an eventuality instead of that vague, distant dream.

I caused me to think about the perks of my profession. Why choose to teach? Three examples came to mind.



Last spring I exchanged emails with a former student then in her first year of teaching. I asked her to send me a success story. She responded with a wonderful sample of her teaching. “I have one 8th grade student with Cerebral Palsy. He’s an adorable red head who

*The educator must
above all understand
how to wait; to reckon
all effects in the light of
the future, not of the
present.*

– Ellen Key

drives his chair like a maniac. But he was still in diapers. He had the control and the mental ability to be potty trained so to work I went. It was difficult because I didn’t have all of my aides behind me on this decision - along with his parents who didn’t care to take the time to do this. To my aides especially changing a diaper was (and still is) easier than putting this

young man on the toilet. So with the help of one aide, we potty trained this young man. It took us about a month, which really isn’t that long of a time. He was ready and took to it fairly quickly. And his parents are thrilled, not to mention how happy I am! The